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Everybody's

FRANK QUINN
EDITOR

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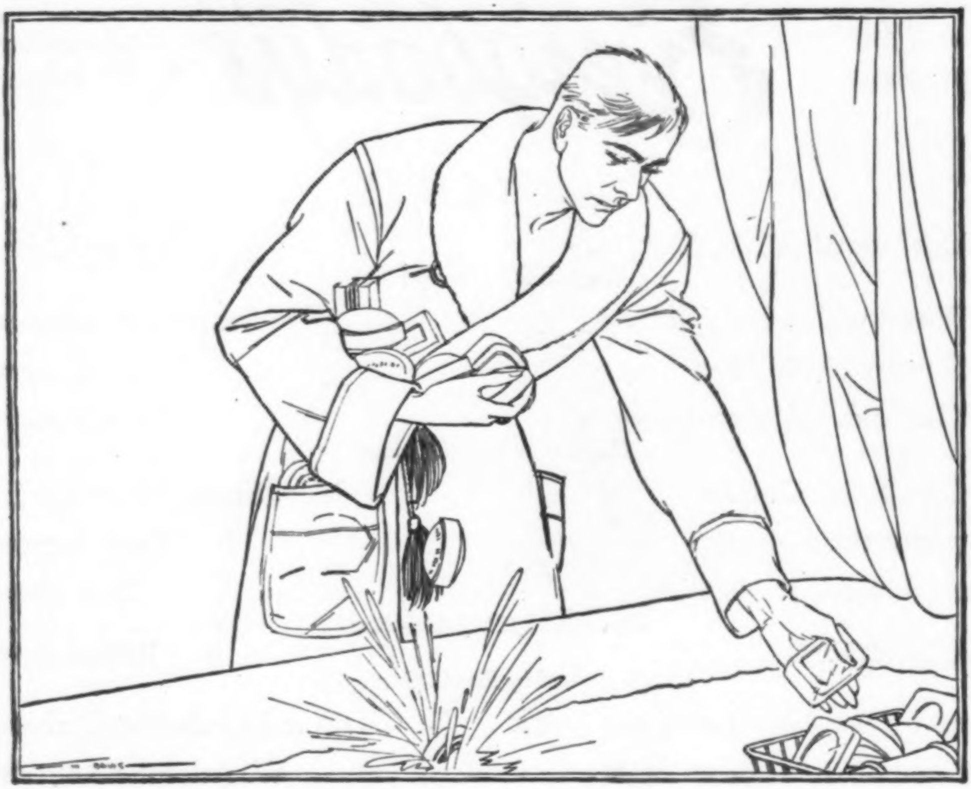

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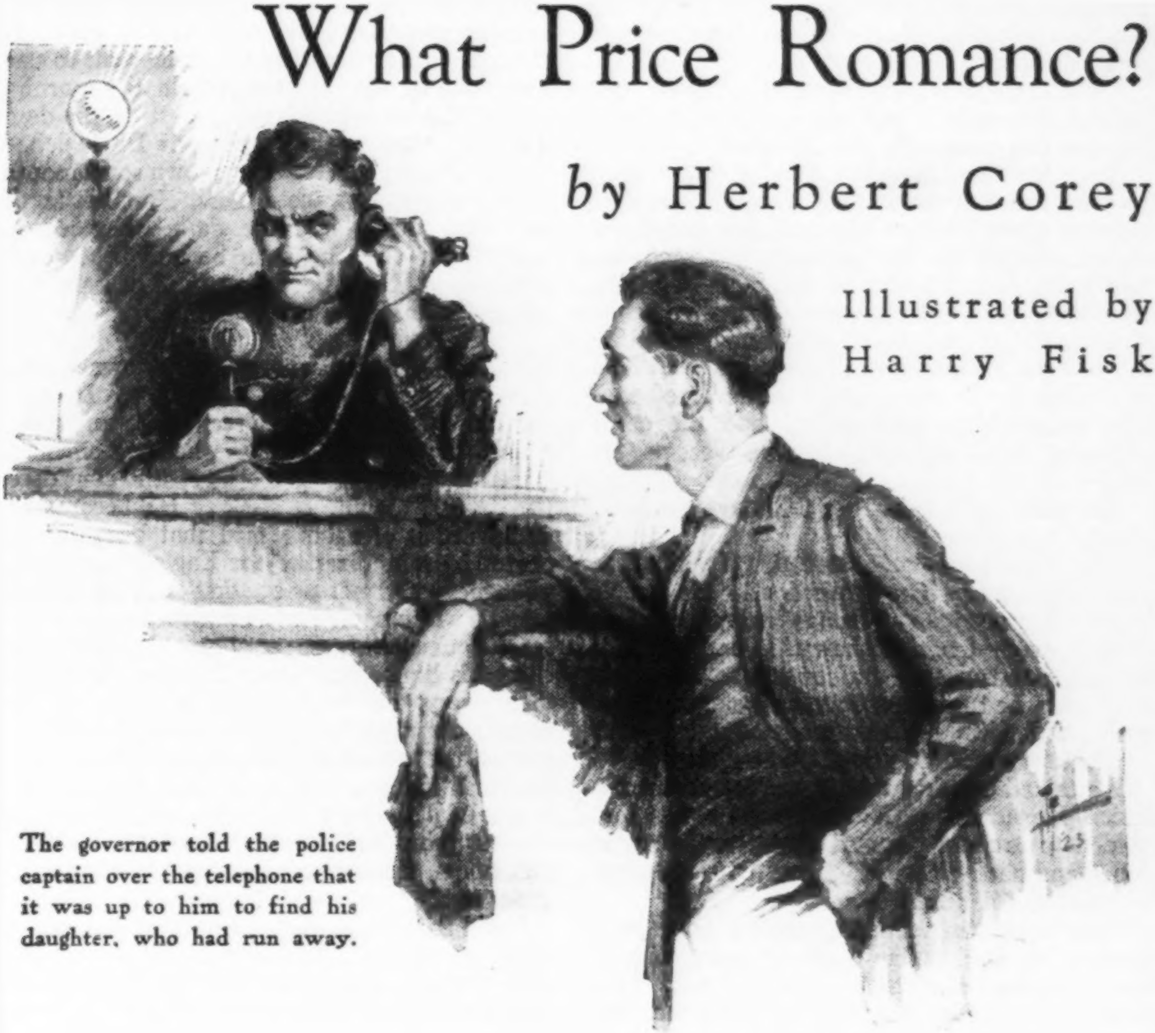
What Price Romance?

by Herbert Corey

Illustrated by Harry Fisk



The governor told the police captain over the telephone that it was up to him to find his daughter, who had run away.

He was a good reporter but no match for a girl who could make men jump through hoops

HE WAS a nice, clean bum, if you know what I mean. But an unmistakable bum. Clean blue shirt that looked as if it had been ironed by being plastered against a window-pane, as the chorus girls do handkerchiefs. Nervous patches in his shave. Clothes almost ragged, shoes blacked but cracking, hair a bit fringy. He began to paw at Ross as we dived down the stairs of the Lorraine Grill.

"Sorry," said Ross, patiently. Not always patient, Ross isn't. His temper is hair triggered and set for a two-ounce pull. "I'm busy; can't stop now."

"Oh," said the bum. He sounded educated. "I wanted to talk with you—"

But he did not let go. Apparently what Ross said had not registered, and then I noticed his essential bummishness. It had been obvious from the beginning that he was drunk and that he had been carrying his jag too long for it to be healthy. Perhaps he was not on the verge of D. T.'s, but he was approaching the verge. Spotted elephants might not clamber on his counterpane that night, but he might hope for a visitation of three-legged redbirds.

"How long have you been drunk?" asked Ross.

"Twenty-five years," said the bum.

Ross said good-by firmly and we were picking at the dietetic masses that out-of-work doctors invent for weak-willed people when he reappeared. He would have drawn up a chair and continued his clipped, jerky prattle if Ross had not declined him. The bum had forgotten his previous rebuffs. He would not take the two dollars, though:

"Thanks," he said. "Some other time. My college class is holding its twenty-fifth reunion in town this week. So I'm all right."

Ross rose and took the bum by the elbow, so that the contrast leaped at one. The bum slender, shaky, brown skinned, fine drawn—a thoroughbred that had failed on the track and had been set to hauling an ash cart—a gentleman who had been drunk for twenty-five years. Ross, stalwart, blond, clear skinned, with the look of power and responsibility upon him. The one using the broad a's and the shortened endings of an aristocratic college and the other speaking the dialect of the Middle West powerhouse.

"Be off," said Ross, "or I'll have you put out."

The bum was not offended. Twenty-five years had made him impervious. He shook hands with me again as though he had been one of our party—I noticed how thin and dry and hot his hands were—and hoped to meet me again. As he turned to leave he looked at Ross with a little twinkle in his swollen eyes:

"Still romantic, Old Boy?" he asked.

We talked of other things, but Ross was distrait. He fiddled with the bread he was forbidden to eat and penciled spots on the sugar cubes and shot dice with them. After a time he spoke of the bum.

"The finest newspaper reporter I have ever known," he said. "He could do more with a few words than any man in the business. You should have seen the way he described the governor in a story once—the little, fat, flurried governor—and his pretty daughter. It was like an etching. Of course, he's been a bum for twenty-five years."

Ross was a cub out West when he first met the bum. Not a cub on a newspaper pay-roll, but a cub determined to get on one. He had always wanted to be a newspaperman. Why, now that he is one, he does not know. He repeated the invariable tag of the profession with the invariable grin. "You newspapermen meet so many interesting people." When school was dismissed each day he used to hang around the police station, until he knew every policeman in town. Like all cubs he thought that police reporting was the beginning and end. It may be, at that. Now and then he picked up an item the regular man had missed.

Little wonder that he overlooked some. He covered City Hall and the justices' courts and the coroner's office. Between times he did assignments.

The honor of seeing his stuff in print was pay enough for Ross in those days, but he was beginning to see light ahead. The city editor swore at him now, just as he did at the regular reporters. He was sure that if he could land one big story he could land on the staff. He thought of that big story before he went to sleep and woke up with the thought in the morning. He could have sold himself for it to the devil. The bum was the star reporter. He had been kicked off a freight train into town some months before, a very complete mess. But his family sent him money in those days—they learned better later on—and soon he had become the little city's Man About Town. The only Man About Town.

IT WAS the bum who gave the town its first boost toward culture, said Ross. He wore the first flannel suit ever seen there and popularized lawn tennis with the better element at a period when the game was still considered the debased toying of sissies. He became the boulevardier of a boulevard that began at the State House and ran to the Eagle House. The younger set sneered at first but ultimately bought white pants and tennis rackets.

Of course, he was a stew. But he could carry his liquor like a man in those days—and then every one drank more or less. It was merely a matter for good natured chuckling if one of the old-timers abandoned his mine or his bank for a few days on the drink. When he got enough aboard some one would load him aboard John Kelly's open face cab and send him home, asleep and snoring. It was a fine little town.

I said that I now had the background and he could go on with the story. The mountains, glass-topped against the blue of the sky, the sand blown in from the desert, the greasy sheepherders in blue overalls who came in twice a year to get drunk and shoot their wages at Ed Quinn's faro-bank. The State House with its imitation of Grecian architecture and the perfectly honest Eagle House with its perfectly honest porch on which the members of the legislature sat and spat tobacco at the brasses. A saw-toothed Main Street with pine false fronts.

"But what did that bum mean when he asked if you are still romantic?"

Ross picked at the tablecloth. It started his nerves jumping just to think of the good old days and the good old, dirty, drunken little town. The bum, he said, was referring to the story in which the governor's daughter was the heroine and all the rest of us were merely the company. She was the prettiest thing you ever saw. A natural-born vamp. Some of 'em learn how to vamp in twenty easy lessons sent in a plain envelope, but she had the doctor talking to himself that first day when he was walking home carrying his bag. Dark eyes and hair, you know, and cheeks just faintly shaded and red lips that needed none of those aids that leave smears behind.

"I know," said Ross, tossing his sugar cubes to the back of his hand. "She kissed me once. That was before the days when kisses had become as cheap as tobacco coupons. When you got a kiss, you earned it. I went around thinking about it for days and about how soft her lips were. Not how sticky."

"You're a cynic and a Fundamentalist," I said.

Anyhow, the governor's daughter had the young men mentally dissolving into pinwheels Ross continued. This bum out here—with a disdainful jerk of the hand—used to keep sober until it was too late at night for her to come downtown. Lots of other gallant young men did likewise. As for Ross himself, he said, being just a kid, he was distinguished by the lady's favor. She used to let him do errands for her, and often she had called him in when he passed the governor's house and fixed him a glass of lemonade and some sponge cake on the veranda. He would have died for her gladly. Of course he had sense enough not to be in love. The competition was too severe and he had always been sternly practical. Merely that he would have been crucified for her.

"And I'd have done my own nailing," said Ross.

He went on to explain that he could see now that the governor was a sort of a joke. Inclined to be sloppy in his dress, until she reformed him, and as windy as the Laramie Trail. He was in a lot of things besides politics. Among other things he owned a clothing store and one of his clerks had been considered the best dressed man in the state until the bum came along. The dressy set considered one good look at his spring suit equivalent to a visit to Chicago.

"There was quite a race between them," said Ross, "until one time this bird"—jerking his hand over his shoulder—"caught the first cold day right in the door with a pair of fawn-colored spats. Then there wasn't any more race because Elmer just curled up and quit. Elmer—he was the good-looking young fellow in the clothing store—used to get passionate in explaining to every one who would listen that spats could not, simply could not, be worn except under certain social conditions and that these conditions did not prevail in our town.

"I'm not saying they are not all right on Fifth Avenue, now, or Newport," this worried Elmer used to tell us for hours at a time, "for those that like 'em, but here, no."

There was quite a strong spat party worked up in these discussions in the governor's store, said Ross, because every one saw that it was not merely spats that was the matter with Elmer. Not one of us would have bought a spat on a bet and if we had been hogtied and one of the accursed contraptions had been slipped on us we would have pitched and bawled like a colt first time saddled. Or maybe like a green dog that has just been pushed into a muzzle. We were all for Elmer, too, on account he was born in our country and this bum—with the derogative wave of the hand—was an outsider and a dude. Also we could not and did not talk the bum's language and we did talk Elmer's and so of course we razzed him quite a lot. We knew the governor's daughter was at the bottom of the rivalry. Now and then she used to tell folks that it made her happy to see our sartorial standards were being raised, even if they did come up just a little at a time and with a sort of sucking noise as though they were being pulled out of the mud.

"I love to see men well dressed," she said.

Elmer quit the clothes competition, said Ross, but he stuck right along in the race for the governor's daughter, and by and by the leisure classes began to make the affair a betting proposition. Nothing, said Ross, diverging profanely from his apparent line of march, makes me as tired as to read somewhere that Western men will not gossip about women or permit their names to be heard in barrooms. If that was ever the case everywhere, said he, it was not the case in our little town. The conversations there ran along what might be called parallel lines, these being placer mining, gambling, sheep, liquor and women and sometimes mathematics was given the toss and this bum—with that injurious jerk of the hand—for a long time, because lots of us figured his being a son of the soil would stand off the bum's good clothes. Then we learned the governor was in favor of the reporter and that switched the odds, because the governor was a right loud mouthed man who used to be a foreman in a mine.

"YOU see," said Ross, "in his capacity as banker he could not help knowing that the bum's father used to send him money every month and that his family was really good. I suppose he thought that marriage would reform a guy like that, too. Completely cure his thirst and alter that theory of his that if you went on doubling you could beat Spanish monte down at Ed Quinn's. Then Elmer had been working for him for years, and I've noticed that a boss establishes a moral superiority, you know. The other fellow gets used to taking orders."

They get pretty wise, said Elmer, just sitting around in saloons that way and with nothing much to talk about except other folks and nothing to do but play a little stud. So Elmer kept getting longer in the betting. Down at Ed Quinn's they had shifted their play complete and was making book on the date when this bum—with the suggestive flick over his right shoulder—would get her.

"Of course, the governor's daughter tried to cheer Elmer up now and then. Or maybe to tantalize him. You never can tell with girls. Often when she walked downtown, maybe to buy a ribbon or order a roast of beef or jack hell out of the grocer for cheating she'd pick up this bum"—with the conventional jerk over the shoulder—"on the way. He was the star reporter, of course, but I noticed he always had time to cease from starring when he caught sight of her. At that he was a whiz as long as he was sober. The *Daily Star* would take him drunk or not, any day the *Daily Mirror* didn't want him."

Ross said that as the pair strolled out toward the governor's house they used to drop into the governor's store and chat with Elmer. Not that it made the boy so happy, you know. This bum—with the jerk—used to high-tone him something awful. I got to know Elmer pretty well in those days and he often told me that if he ever got a chance to take a wallop at that bird he was going to dish his face in like a wagon wheel some one left on the Santa Marta desert. But he never said anything that Elmer could pick up. Just high-toned him. Ah-ah—like that.

Of course, Ross said, he was on Elmer's side. He liked the clerk much the better of the two, but honesty compelled him to admit that his admiration was for the bum. As a budding newspaperman he had learned to gauge the excellence of that journalist's talents. He knew news, he was a mixer, he turned even the natural distaste the town felt for his cane and spats into an asset, and above all, he could write. Ross used to trot along with him after stories, and listen with his mouth wide open while the star reporter got them and then next morning read the finished article in the *Mirror*.

"And weep," said Ross. "Because I knew I could never learn to write that way."

Elmer was never invited to the parties at the governor's house. Not a chance. Not any more than if he were a sheepherder. Sometimes Ross used to enlarge his experience of the gay world by sneaking past the governor's house in the dark, under the lens that canopied this best street in the residential addition the governor's firm was boosting, and lean on the picket fence and watch the merriment inside through the big plate glass windows. He used to excuse himself to himself by saying that he must find out how things are done in high society, so that when he went East he would know how to behave himself. But he knew that the real reason why he did it was the governor's daughter.

"The governor used to put up a snappy party, too," said Ross. "The women were just beginning to wear evening dress in our town, then. There had been a right considerable said in some of the churches about how some of them dressed, but that had died down. Most of the men had dinner jackets, of course, that they wore at banquets down at the Elks' Ball, but the governor's daughter made them get into the full regalia. I used to watch the governor from under the elms, shoving his potty little stomach through his drawing-room in front of the two tails and being proud and happy. It was mighty funny, seen from the picket fence, to see these perfectly ordinary people all dressed up like plush firehorses and just naturally beaming with innocent joy. Only, of course, I didn't know it then."

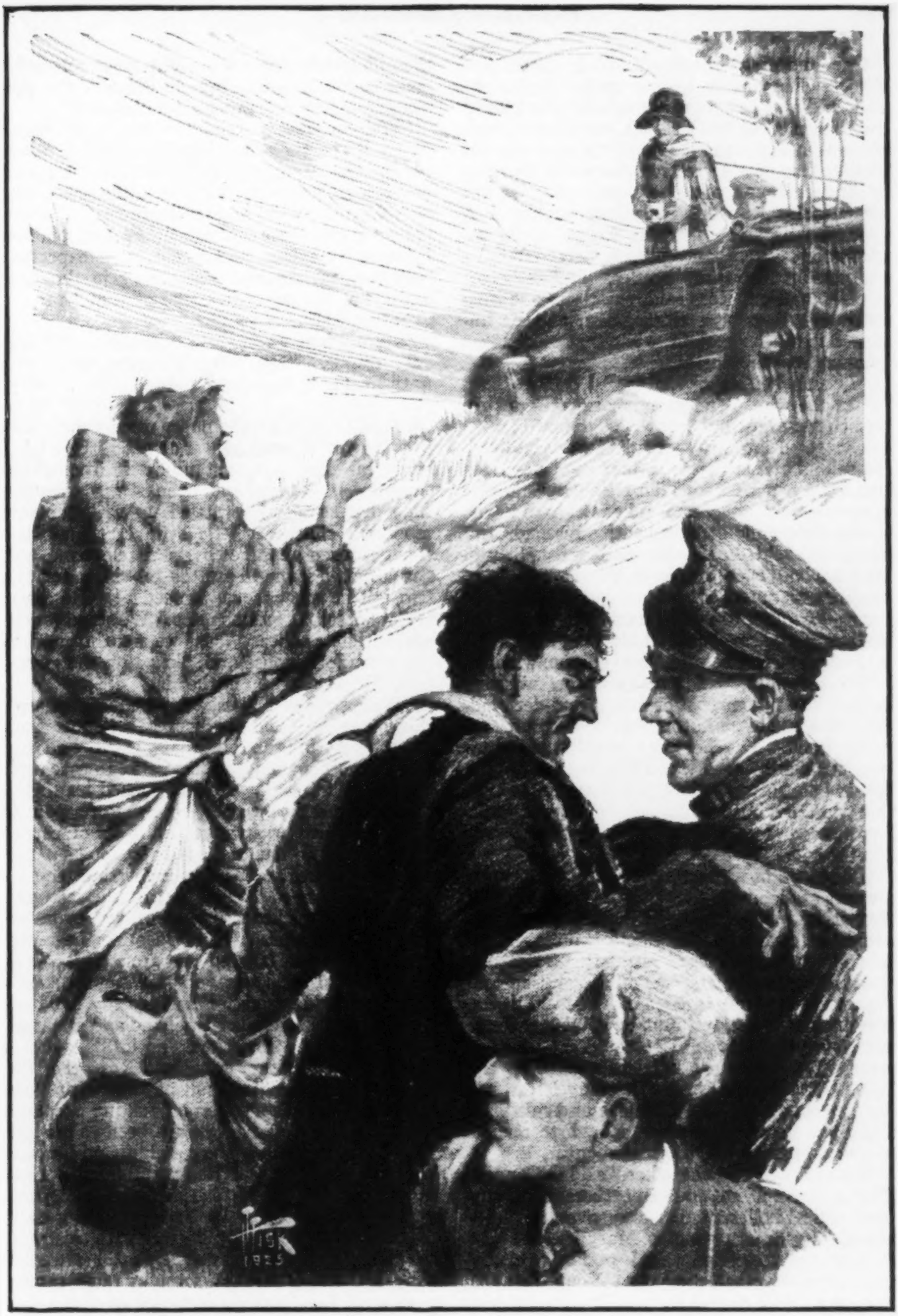
On the party nights Ross often felt subconsciously that some one else was also hanging over other places in the picket fence, he said, in addition to the townspeople who stopped for a moment on their way home to make wisecracks about the hard-collared aristocracy. By and by he identified the other watcher as that poor fish Elmer. In the end the clerk got so low in spirit that he used to talk to Ross, although the distance between a high school boy and the ex-dictator of fashion was practically infinite. He didn't whimper any, said Ross. He said he was going to get her yet.

"One time we were standing at the picket fence," said Ross, "maybe too near the street lamp, so that we might have been recognized from the porch, when the governor's daughter came out on the porch with this bum"—with the habitual jerk—"and we could see them by the light through the window. That is, we could see his white shirt bosom and the fainter glow of her neck and arms. I guess she could not see us, though, for she let him kiss her. Not much of a kiss. Not near as much of a kiss as I got. Still—"

THAT time Elmer pretty nearly went loco, said Ross, and went away waving his arms and using sheepherder talk. I was right sorry for him, for I could see that he didn't have a chance. It was about this time that I sent on to Sears Roebuck for a cane and began to practice swinging it in my room at home. I never had the nerve to carry it downtown, of course. But I figured that if the governor's daughter married the bum they might go away East to live and I might get a chance at his job. A cane was a part of it, I thought. Only in newspaper work could I see a chance of escaping from my fetters. Father used to play poker with the governor Friday nights and often told me that as soon as I had graduated I was to have a place in the clothing store.

"It might be worse, Kid," Elmer said. "There's a heap of money to be made in a good clothing store out here, and there will be more as soon as our folks understand that wearing clothes isn't a misdemeanor. Lots of 'em buying two-three suits a year right now."

"It hasn't done you any good to have certain people wear good clothes," I said. Elmer swore.



"You little devil," the governor said, "I've got a mind to give you the best licking you ever had."
"Why, Poppa," she said, "The idea of your talking like that!" Then she snapped the camera.

One morning—maybe a little after two o'clock—Ross came in the police station, he said, and stood there watching the flies bite at the thin patches on Capt. O'Connor's red head. He was about due to go home, because his mother was getting restive about his standing as an amateur police reporter. She wasn't sympathetic with his ambition, anyhow. A good job as suit salesman seemed more respectable to her, than reporting petty larcenies and persons who threw bottles. Just as he got into the station, Ross said, the telephone rang as though it were a third alarm and he answered it for the captain, while that official was yawning and rubbing his face.

"There's hell to pay, Cap," I said to him. "Take the wire. The governor says his daughter has run away and you've got to find her."

The governor was so mad he just bubbled. He said that his daughter had been pestering him for a trip East for a long time and now he guessed she'd gone and taken it and if she thought she could get away with any rough stuff like that she'd damn soon find out. He said that he had been wakened by the telephone ringing and somebody whose voice he sort of knew—he forgot to ask the name, but it sounded like a boy's voice—had told him that his daughter had just climbed out of her bedroom window.

"On a ladder," said the governor, swearing hard. "Oh, a common, ordinary, dod-dern ladder. She got in an automobile with a suit case in her hand. Yes, her car. No, I don't know whether there was any one else in the automobile or not. Yes, she had plenty money to take this trip East, but I ain't a-going to stand for it. I pampered that girl all I'm going to and now I'm through. I—I—"

Old Captain O'Connor was a right good organizer when he got fully waked up. He said that it had been too late for the governor's daughter to get the Eastbound express. Anyhow she was too smart for that. Some one would have recognized her at the station and she would have been picked off the train before it got out of the state. But by driving seventy miles over to Maryvale she could get into another state and catch the eight o'clock on the V. P. He asked if she had left any letter and the governor acted like a maniac and said that if she had he still had sense enough to read it and would have told O'Connor about it.

"I'll get a car and chase her," said O'Connor, "like you want me to. But there isn't any need you're hollering that way over the telephone. If she has gone to Maryvale she will be over the state line and I won't have any more authority than a coyote. You'll have to come along with me—"

And he privately added his conviction that if the governor did, his daughter was apt to bite his ear off. Old Captain O'Connor had a good deal of sense and he said he would play the girl to win any time. The governor could make a lot of noise, but he thought the girl would out-luck and out-bet him any time.

"Well, it looked good for me," said Ross. "Here is the big story that is to make a newspaperman out of me, and Captain O'Connor said I could go along with him in the police car, but when it came to the showdown I lacked the nerve to go through with it. So I telephoned Ed Quinn's saloon and found, as I expected, that our star reporter was sitting in the stud game, not having gone broke at that hour. I gave him what I knew.

"I'll be right down there," he said, not being very drunk. "Don't let O'Connor get away until I come."

ABOUT the time the police car finished taking on oil and gas and water the nighthawk cab that used to stand out in front of Ed Quinn's—being low and open it was easy to slide drunks into it—rattled up with the star reporter. He was a little drunker than I had thought when he talked over the telephone, and had a bottle in one hand as provision for the trip, but he was as sober as need be. He made O'Connor let me go along, too. We stood pretty well with the police. Then we went around to the governor's house and picked up the governor. He was still up in the air.

"Well, sir," said Ross, "there never was anything funnier. The governor had forgotten all about everything except that his girl had run away from home and he was going to catch her and bring her back. He had tucked his nightshirt imperfectly into the loose top of a pair of pants and was wearing an old pair of carpet slippers and no hat and his hair stood up like sheaves of wheat. It was summertime and he didn't really need a coat, but at the last moment he had picked up what proved to be an old Indian blanket. When O'Connor began to step on the gas he twisted that around his shoulders. Then I tried to reach past him for something and made a miscue and put my hand on his face, and I had oil on my hand and gummed him up. But he didn't even notice."

They rode and they rode, said Ross, the star reporter taking a little pull at the bottle now and then and the governor talking steadily about how good he had always been to his girl and how much money she cost him and how he had just given her a deed to a mighty nice bunch of lots out in the Executive Addition that he had just laid out. He kept on saying that if she thought she could get away with this he'd show her. O'Connor gave the car all it would stand and slewed around some of those sandy turns until Ross thought it would go over sure. You could see the dust hanging in the early morning air for miles behind them. Once they had a blowout and the governor behaved like he was demented until the tire was replaced.

By this time the sun was up over the horizon, but we still had time enough to catch the eight o'clock train on the V. P. if nothing more went wrong. We passed the stone pillars at the state line and then we came to a car standing by the side of the road. The governor saw it first and said that it was his daughter's car. The minx, he said, had probably lost a tire or something. But when we got to it there she was sitting in the front seat of the car, looking as cool as ice and Elmer along with her. She said:

"You're late, Poppa. Elmer and I have been sitting here more than two hours waiting for you. It got cold."

"Well," said Ross, "the governor didn't jump out of the police car. He just sort of lifted his arms and flew. I started to get up about the same time he did and caught my hand in his nightshirt, which had partly got outside of the loose top of his pants anyhow, and pulled it so that it hung in a sort of festoon, like they drape the Grand Old Flag on the speakers' stand on the Fourth of July. But he didn't notice it at all. He just went hopping and hollering over toward his daughter.

" 'You little devil,' he said, 'I gotta mind to give you the damndest best licking you ever had right here and now—' "

"Why, Poppa," she said. "The idea of your talking that way! And you ought to know better than to talk that way to me, anyhow. You've tried it before."

Then she snapped with a camera. The governor had not noticed that she had a camera in her hand. None of the others had, only me. I had sort of slewed around to one side, being of the belief that Mamma might not like to have her son mixed up too prominently in these ridiculous revels in high life. The old man sort of rolled his eyes when he heard the click and before he could get 'em set again she had shot once more. Then she bust into one of those trills of merry girlish laughter, you know, that you'd just as soon hear as the mutterings of a Bengal tiger if you were engaged in thwarting any of her plans. It had what you might term an undertone of menace in it.

"I must say, Poppa," she said, "that when you set out to make a fool of yourself you certainly do as complete a job as any one could. Here you are, the Governor of the State, made up to look like a dissolute Piute squaw. Only squaws do not wear pants except in cold weather. And your little friend with the bottle, too—"

She clicked her camera again. By this time the bum had gotten as full as a goat, Ross said, what with the ride shaking him up a good deal and his being fairly diligent with the bottle. He always closed his right eye when he got pretty well tanked, so that he could see more clearly, and he was standing sort of lopsided with the bottle hanging out of his left hand where it could get into the picture good. And old Captain O'Connor had thrown open his coat while he was driving and his cap had got over to one side of his head. I remember looking at the three of them and thinking that it is a grave mistake for a guy to be photographed with his mouth about three-quarters open. It isn't chic.

"IT LOOKS as though you had had a rough party," said the governor's daughter, very cold and severe. "If any one of you is sober enough to explain what has been going on I certainly would be glad to listen. If no one is, Elmer and I will be going on. We're due to get married in Maryvale."

"Well, sir," said Ross, "you should have heard the governor go into action with his broadsides and both turrets then. Yes, sir, he did himself proud. He mixed metaphors and part of the speech he made to the Sons of the Desert along with as fine a line of strictly American profanity as I ever heard. He said that if the fool girl did not come out of the car and go home with him he would slap her face sidewise. And Elmer's too. But the governor's daughter said that, no, she did not think so. She said that she and Elmer with a little assistance had framed this whole thing. Knowing the disconsolate way in which her father looked on her husband-to-be they had resorted to what you might call modified blackmail.

"And you walked into the trap, Poppa," she said, "just like a cow into a mudhole. You did just what we thought you would do and I have three photographs of the Governor of the State with his nightshirt flung to the breeze and the captain of the night police who looks as though he had been dissipating and the star reporter for the official organ carrying a bottle, but not being fit for much else. And if you think the *Daily Star* could not make good use of these three photographs then you are not as good a politician as your loving daughter thinks you."

The *Daily Star*, Ross explained in an inside, always took an attitude of pessimism about the governor and the police force. The governor was nobody's fool. He began to see what was what and I could see him thrusting his nightshirt back where it belonged and trying to soothe his face down to a proper expression for a loving father who was ready to forgive, when old Captain O'Connor had to take a hand. I guess maybe he didn't think as fast as the governor. Anyhow, he thought he would try the good old police bluff on Elmer. It's mighty hard to call a policeman's bluff, you know. Most of us let 'em get away with it.

"Come out of that car, you dressed up pup," says Captain O'Connor, "or I'll wear my nightstick out on you like a broom—"

[*Continued on page 182*]

At the Wheel *with a* Lady Skipper

For nearly twenty-two years "the little captain" has been the only woman pilot on the Mississippi. In her time she has witnessed the passing of one of the most vivid periods in the colorful life of the river

by Beatrice Washburn

MARK TWAIN used to say that a pilot must know the Mississippi as you know your own front hall. Captain Blanche Leathers knows the river from the stilted houses of Pilot Town on the Gulf to the bluffs above Vicksburg. Every village, every negro cabin, every plantation and galleried mansion set in its grove of magnolias is but an incident in her day as other women mark time by the market man, the ice man, the laundry man and the baby's milk. She is known to every planter, every shipper, every pilot, every hound dog and banjo-plucking darkie on the banks of the "Father of Waters."

HUNDREDS of people lined the levee to see Captain Blanche Leathers back the *Natchez* into the current. As she started up stream, skirting the sterns of the ships in the wharves, ferry boats, ocean liners, tugs and factories burst into whistles. It sounded like New Year's Eve gone mad. Four tugs made her an escort of honor as far as Carrollton. Out to Six Mile Point and Gretna the people along the banks waved and shouted.

"It's the little captain," echoed from shore to shore. "Hooray for the little captain!" In those days she merited the name, for she weighed a scant one hundred pounds.

Mrs. Blanche Leathers of New Orleans believes quite literally in paddling your own canoe. She has been doing it for nearly twenty-two years as river captain on the Mississippi. So far as the Board of Supervising Inspectors knows, she is the only woman in the Southern territory to hold a captain's license or, as she expresses it more technically, a master pilot's license. Undoubtedly she is the first and original woman captain in the United States, if not in the world. But indubitably she does not look it.

A strenuous out-of-door career, full of danger, responsibility and adventure has left few traces on Mrs. Leathers. She is one of those young-old ladies who make the average flapper look sophisticated. Smooth, unlined skin, sparkling eyes and a straight figure are what the river has given her. She positively refuses to wear old ladies' clothes and she has always horrified the contemporary river captains by appearing in the pilot house garbed in the latest mode.

"No excuse for a woman looking frumpish just because she is working," she asserts briskly, "and there is no reason for any woman growing old so long as she keeps busy and associates with young people."

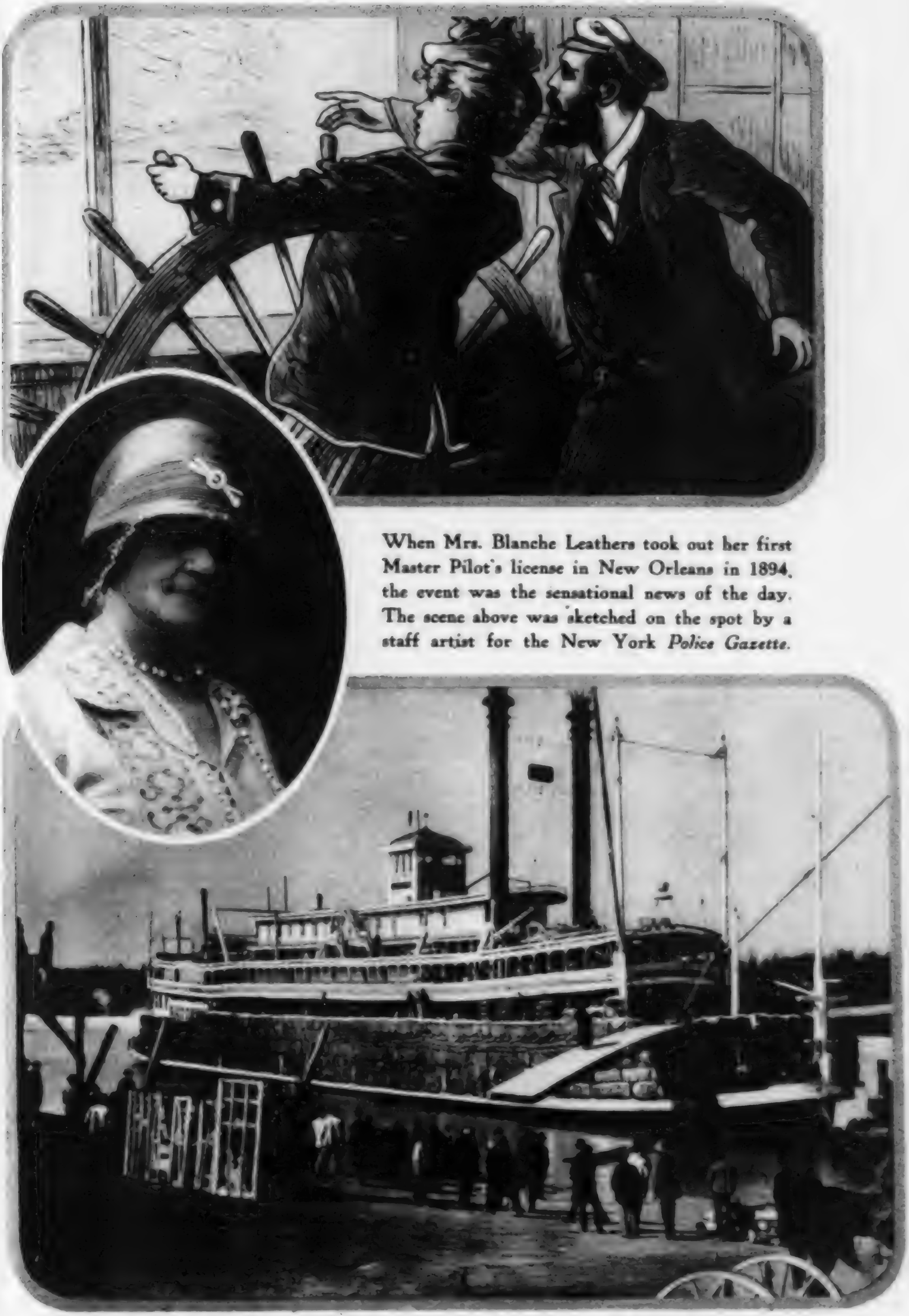
Mrs. Leathers has been kept busy by one of the busiest rivers in the world. She knows the Mississippi as you know the back of your hand, every nook and cranny of it, every inlet, every island, every shoal. And this, in the valley of the Father of Waters, is no small distinction.

When Mrs. Leathers took out her first license in New Orleans, she was about as inconspicuous as the Prince of Wales during his late visit to Long Island. Vast crowds escorted her to and from the Custom House where she signed her license.

The lady captain was not only a pioneer, she was a phenomenon. Remember this was in 1894. It was an age when her women friends were unable to button their boots or do their hair without a maid. This little north Louisiana girl, the daughter of a wealthy planter, James S. Douglass, had mastered a man's work and was earning many times a man's salary.

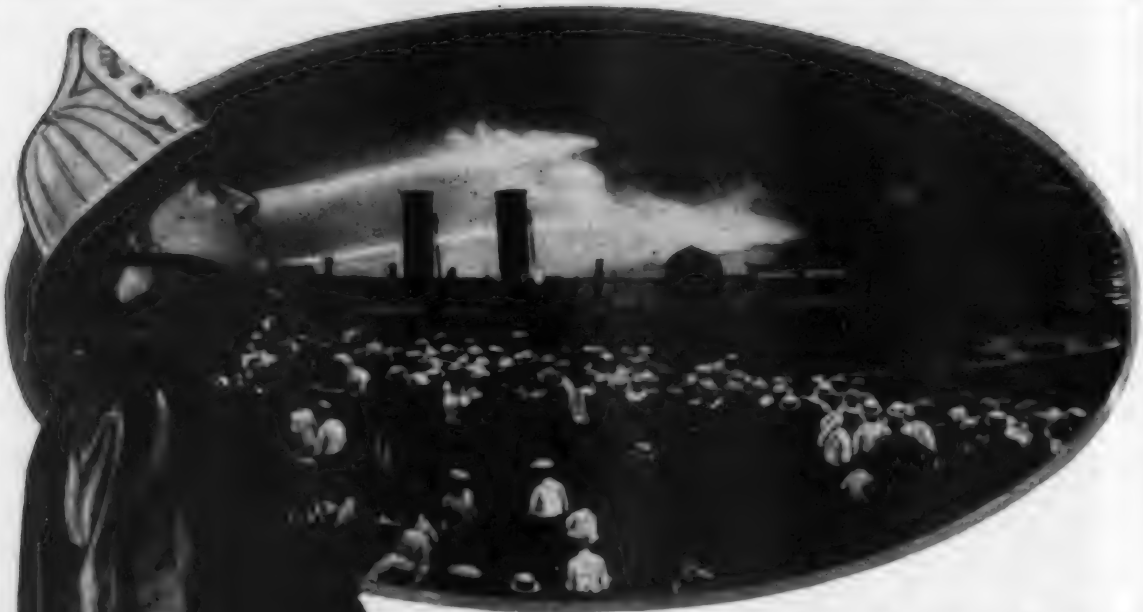
The South greeted Mrs. Leathers with all the enthusiasm it bestows upon its successful daughters from Lady Astor to Ma Ferguson. People came from as far west as Houston and as far east as Richmond to ride up the Mississippi on the *Natchez*. It was as fashionable as a trip to Hot Springs. Photographers arrived from

[*Continued on page 168*]

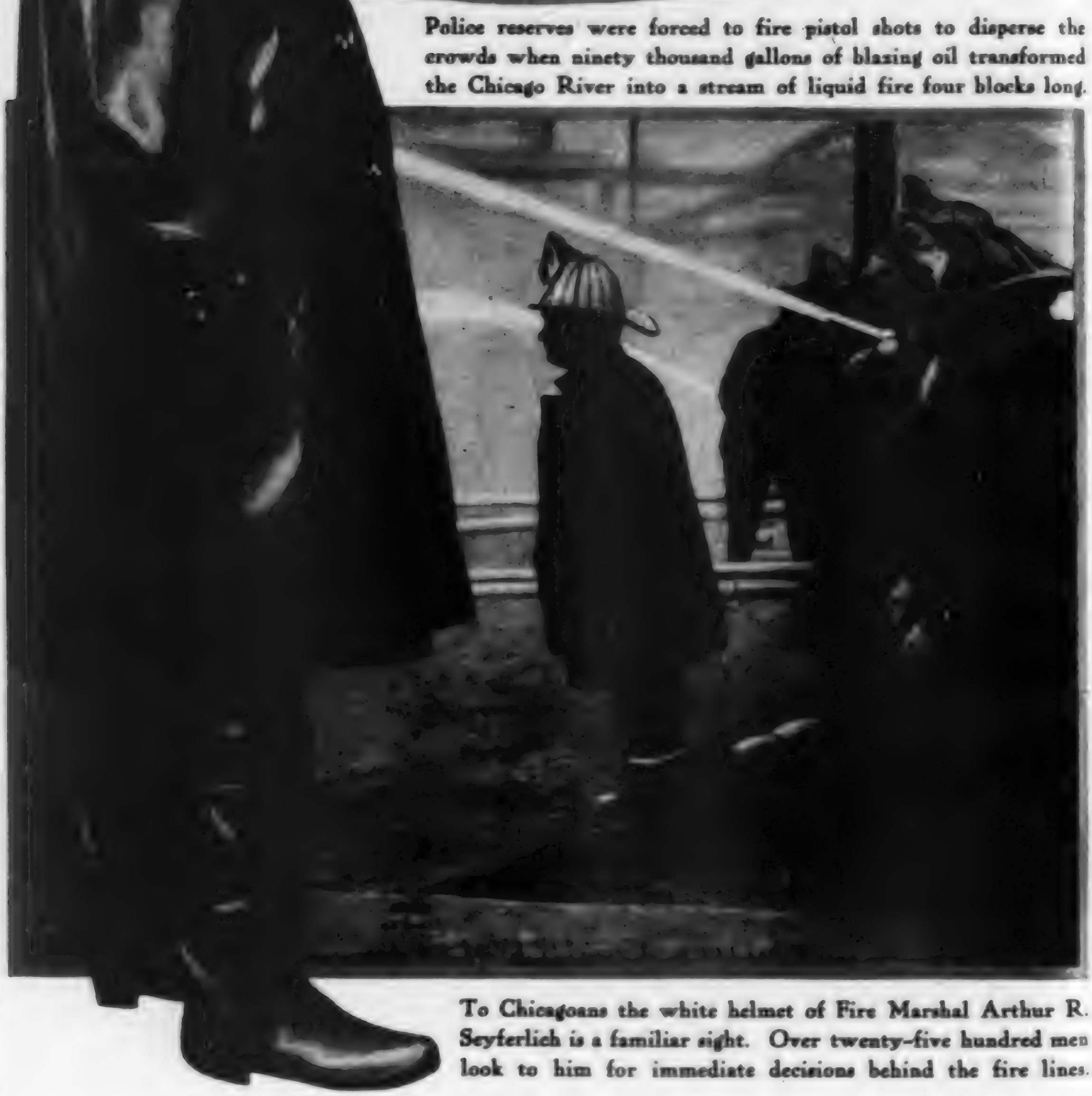


When Mrs. Blanche Leathers took out her first Master Pilot's license in New Orleans in 1894, the event was the sensational news of the day. The scene above was sketched on the spot by a staff artist for the New York *Police Gazette*.

In the heyday of Mississippi River travel, the *Natchez*, commanded by Captain Blanche; was the last word in steamboats. People of wealth and social position would make a trip up the river at least once a year. Births and deaths, christenings and balls were among the captain's responsibilities, and once she carried the largest cargo of cotton ever shipped at one loading.



Police reserves were forced to fire pistol shots to disperse the crowds when ninety thousand gallons of blazing oil transformed the Chicago River into a stream of liquid fire four blocks long.



To Chicagoans the white helmet of Fire Marshal Arthur R. Seyferlich is a familiar sight. Over twenty-five hundred men look to him for immediate decisions behind the fire lines.

He has Fought 10,000 Fires

"Get 'em in and get 'em out" is the slogan of Chicago's Fire Marshal, Arthur R. Seyferlich. His story is drawn from a store of thirty-five years of fire-fighting memories

by W. A. P. John

EVER since Mrs. O'Leary's cow kicked over the lantern that set the city ablaze back in the '70's, Chicago has been bent on reducing fire-fighting to a science. While the fire laddies are out on one alarm, the experts are anticipating the next one. If you are curious to know when your place will burn they can tell you that the chances are two to one in favor of the evening, also that the hour is more liable to be 5 P.M. than any other, that April is the banner month for fires, and that Friday, as might be expected, is the fire-fighter's busiest day.

IT WAS one of those "4-11" alarms that send thrills of apprehension through every man jack making the run—the final clamorous call for all hands and every available piece of fire-fighting apparatus. This time it was a six-story building in Chicago's most congested district, a building with oil-soaked floors, narrow stairways, obsolete construction that would burn like tinder—and scores of human lives at stake! Converging from four directions, came every piece of apparatus within striking distance—pumpers belching smoke, hook and ladders coasting around corners on two wheels, big, satiny black horses snaking their way through crowded downtown streets. For this was before the day of motorized apparatus.

When the first company arrived, the building was in flames, save the two top floors, and these were going fast. The stairways were sheeted with blaze. There was no hope of conquering the conflagration, only that of preventing its spread. Then, above the din, came a shrill, insistent clanging. Chief Horan was arriving, hunched forward in his single-seater buggy, one eye on the street, the other on the driver at his elbow. As the buggy wheeled up, a roar swelled from the crowd. Countless hands pointed upward. Silhouetted against the lurid square of a sixth-floor window, crouched a girl. Seventy feet above the pavement—and cut off!

A ladder swung upward, poised perpendicularly and then dropped gently against the wall. Five feet short—and it was the longest then being used by the Chicago fire department!

Nevertheless a figure raced toward its top—Chief Horan's driver, a brawny, beautifully muscled young Irishman, one Patrick Egan. Remember the name—it belongs among the heroes. Back of him came the chief himself; and back of the first pair, another, equally agile and equally Irish, Barker and Daugherty by name. To the very top went the quartette, there to pause for the briefest passage of orders.

Now get the picture clearly. At a sixth-floor window, a girl cut off on all sides by flames; five feet below the sill, the end of a shaking ladder; and on its uppermost rungs, four men working in line of duty and enacting the bravest feat ever witnessed by Arthur R. Seyferlich, present Fire Marshal of Chicago, with thirty-five years of fire-fighting memories to draw upon.

Flattened against the wall, Egan planted his feet on the uppermost rung. Behind him edged Horan, his feet locked into the rung below, his square shoulder in the small of Egan's back, his big arms clasped around Egan's chest; and behind Horan, Barker and Daugherty—waiting.

A strange hush fell on the crowd. The silence was almost tomb-like save for the crackling of the flames. And there were ten thousand people watching below. But the silence was broken by ten thousand whispered "ohs" when Egan and Horan leaned slowly *backward* as one. Egan at an angle almost perpendicular to the ladder, Horan his stalwart human brace.

Tensely the girl bent forward. Egan's lips moved. "Jump!" he called to her, spreading his arms. . . . And she jumped! For ten cruel seconds the interlocked trio wavered—quivered desperately, while Horan threw his whole strength into the task of bringing them all upright, of keeping them all from plunging backward to the street.

Then releasing one arm, Horan reached up and around Egan, lifted the girl free and passed her, like a kitten, to Barker behind him. Another backward swing saw the unconscious burden in Daugherty's arms. He tossed her over his shoulder and clambered to the street.

There was a glint in Chief Seyferlich's eyes while he was telling that story—in the eyes that didn't seem to want to leave a blue-clad figure absorbed over a sheaf of papers at a table across the room—a brawny, beautifully muscled Irishman, somewhat scholarly now, with a pair of horn-rimmed glasses. The chief nodded significantly. "Egan," he said, "God love him!"

Of Egan you shall hear more.

Striking the Heart of a Fire

Less than sixty, a mountain of a man, Seyferlich is the antithesis of the grizzled veteran I had been expecting to meet. Perhaps it is the eternal energy of Chicago. I don't know. But here is the chief of a fire department of over twenty-five hundred men who has personally fought some ten thousand fires, who has a quick smile and curly black hair, a keen sense of humor, a genuine talent for after-dinner speaking, a love for swimming and baseball—and bubbling youth! Yet all over the world he is known as a sagacious, experienced fire-fighter, grand exponent of the fire-fighting theory, "Get 'em in and get 'em out!"

"That's the strategy in a nutshell," he explained, emphasizing his words by driving his clenched fist through the air. "Get 'em in and get 'em out! In New York where there are no alleys and everything is solidly built up they have to fight fires from the street. Bad business, that—tough business. But here we have alleys. Our blocks aren't built up so compactly. We can get in from behind. It gives us a chance to strike at the heart of the fire quickly. Get those words: heart of the fire—and quickly. So in they go. Four companies answer every first alarm. The first on the job goes in; the second goes behind; the third goes in front and the fourth is available to be placed by the chief in charge. But with your men on the inside, comes another responsibility. You've got to get 'em out.

"That's where experience counts—where only experience can guide a chief. He may be a battalion chief or an assistant marshal or myself.

"He has to be familiar with every type of construction and every type of contents. He has to know how much water can be poured into a floor piled with rags, say, before it will cave, how much heat all types of side walls will withstand. He has to know the inside of every important building in his district like the palm of his hand. He has to be able to judge by smell, temperature, and sixth sense when she's 'going to blow,' and before she blows, he has to get his men out.

"It's different from the army. In war your enemy is human, has human limitations and moves according to fundamental rules that haven't changed since Napoleon's day. But fire—fire knows no rules. You can never anticipate its actions. Every fire presents a different problem to be solved on the spot and with damned little chance of a staff conference."

"Tell me something about the men," I suggested, "some of the feats of bravery."

"Feats of bravery?" he questioned. He tossed at me the most recent annual report of the Fire Marshal to Chicago's City Council. "There are a few of them; I can't begin to tell you about them all; I have a meeting of marshals at half past one and it is ten o'clock now. Read 'em yourself. It is all in a day's work."

In that volume of dry statistics about the miles of high-pressure mains laid and the amount of gasoline consumed last year by Engine Company No. 77, there is a section that proves the inadequacy of the written word. "John Beckman, captain of Hook and Ladder Company, number so-and-so, is honorably mentioned, etc." No less than thirty-seven such instances, each involving from one to ten firemen, each concerning some feat ranging from the capture of a runaway horse in front of a public school to the rescue of six persons from the roof of a burning building on a sleety March day "at 12:30 A.M." All in a single year! By unsung heroes—and some of them on a wage of less than five dollars a day!

No man can serve in the Chicago Fire Department long without flirting with death at his elbow. Seyferlich, in his thirty-five years, has had many such flirtations. His closest call came back in 1910 when he was a battalion chief. A nasty fire had been discovered in the basement of a wholesale meat market. Carrying into execution the departmental theory of getting at the heart of the fire, he was crawling along the basement floor in the dark. Suddenly the hot acrid air changed in odor. A wave of gas, at once sickeningly sweet and searing, blinded his eyes and burned his nose and throat. The ammonia tanks had let go! He swung about, blindly trying to fight his way back, then plunged to the floor unconscious, the flames not twenty feet away. Hours later, it seemed, the last man of his company, cutting across the rear of the room to escape, felt his boot strike a metal object. He stooped, found Seyferlich's hat, then Seyferlich himself, face down in the water. He dragged him into the open air. For ten and a half hours Seyferlich lay unconscious. But he was on duty the following day. Except for that passing booted foot that happened to strike his metal hat . . .

TWO years previous the same deadly fumes, during a cold storage warehouse fire, had sent more than a score of firemen down and out, among them Seyferlich. The warehouse, consisting of six floors crammed with butter, pork and pre-Thanksgiving poultry, presented one of the most difficult and stubborn fires in the annals of the fire department. Three hundred thousand pounds of melting butter ran knee deep on the fifth floor, feeding the flames to fierce intensity and ably seconded by tons of hams, lard and bacon. On every floor there were clusters of firemen and a squad of twenty-odd on the roof. There was a click, a hiss, and in a trice almost, the men on the roof were writhing in agony, clawing at their throats, screaming and praying. Ammonia. Then two of them, Sheehan and Dillon, managed to scramble to their feet and clear their lungs and eyes enough to permit them to plunge back into the fumes. In one corner was a scuttle hole through which a ladder projected. Twenty-two times this pair fought their way into the gas blanket to bring out an unconscious companion and *slide him down the ladder*. For that feat Dillon received the coveted Carter H. Harrison medal and Sheehan received honorable mention.

At the same time Seyferlich on the fifth floor was having his troubles. Groggy from the fumes, he staggered behind his men into the air, he and his whole company knocked out. Most of them were quickly on their way to the hospital. Lying on the ground waiting his turn, Seyferlich heard some one say that his lieutenant, drunk with ammonia fumes, had reeled back into the blazing building. Seyferlich had already carried out four unconscious men. But staggering at once to his feet, he turned back to the dim, smoke-filled cavernous

Experience is the only guide a Fire Chief can rely on in the thick of action. Every fire presents a different problem to be solved on the spot and with no time for a staff conference. The Chief has to be familiar with every type of building construction and contents. He has to know how much water can be poured into a floor before it will cave and how much heat the side walls will stand. And when "She's going to blow," in the fireman's phrase, his first thought must be how to get his men out, and out quickly.

rooms. There he groped about the floor, himself on the verge of collapse. In one corner he finally stumbled across his quarry, reeled to his feet and tried to lift the burden. Too weak for that, he seized the lieutenant by the coat collar and worked his way, foot by foot, to the elevator shaft where both were later found and carried out. "Honorable mention?" Chief Seyferlich shook his head, "Hell, no!" He had written the report himself. . . . And it was all in a day's work.

In 1915, the *Eastland* disaster sent a thrill of horror all over America. An excursion boat, while still at her dock in the Chicago River with two thousand aboard, suddenly rolled over on her side. Instantly, that filthy stream was a churning mass of frantic, struggling, screaming, maddened humanity. There were many miraculous rescues, many inspiring feats of heroism. But none was fraught with more stark bravery than that of Battalion Chief Patrick Egan, at one time driver to Chief Horan, wearer, I believe, of every medal for valor that a Chicago fireman can wear, now fifth assistant fire marshal.

Into the Jaws of Death

When the *Eastland* turned, some one pulled a fire-box. Egan's battalion answered. When he arrived, others were engaged in succoring those in the water. But there were women and children *within the hull*, the sides of which lay away from the dock at about a thirty-degree angle. While the acetylene torches were still on their way, Egan leaped off the dock to the adjoining hull, scrambled up the slippery plates, smashed in a porthole with a crowbar and *dropped inside*—dropped into the strange, dark bowels of a vessel where scores of human beings were trapped and fighting like rats. I don't know how many he pulled out. No one seems to know. That isn't important. The vital thing is the utter disregard of danger displayed in taking the chances he did—making his way from stateroom to stateroom, smashing in doors, sometimes swimming, sometimes crawling, sometimes diving into submerged compartments to come up with twenty-four inches of head room air on the other side, finding sometimes a living being, more often a corpse.

Later they burned holes in the plates and the work of rescue and human salvage kept up for twelve hours into the night. Of course, Egan was not alone. Around him were scores of equally brave firemen. But Egan's name and Egan's feat seemed to stand out. Why? Perhaps those veterans to whom I talked can tell you. I can't.

As regards Egan's further exploits, one excerpt from the last Fire Marshal's report requires no comment: "Patrick Egan, Fifth Assistant Fire Marshal is honorably mentioned for rescuing a woman from the third floor of a burning building, by means of a thirty-foot ladder at 2138 Federal Street at 3:34 A.M., June 21, 1923." Do you wonder why Seyferlich's eyes lighted up as he said, "Egan. . . . God love him!"

Another man of Egan's stripe is Fireman Otto C. Dahl. Back in 1922, he and his companion broke into the official records for carrying a woman down three flights of stairs in a burning building. Six weeks later, he was mentioned again for rescuing a man, single handed, from a second floor during a fire. A short time later he won the Lambert Tree medal for disentangling Marshal Buckley from a heavily charged electric wire and saving the man's life in the face of the most frightful peril a fireman can face.

Then there is the one of Battalion Chief Durkin who led seven men in a daring rescue from the upper story of a downtown "light manufacturing" building. Answering a "4-11" alarm, Durkin and his men arrived to find the entire lower portion of a six-story building a mass of flames under tremendous headway. On the fifth floor were six frantic girls at the windows, cut off from the stairways and hemmed in on all sides by billows of fire. An aërial ladder was raised, and up it clambered Durkin followed by his seven. Seizing the first girl, Durkin passed her down, duplicating this action with another as soon as the man below him had transferred her farther down. Almost as quickly as it takes to relate it here, the six girls had been lifted unconscious from the smoking sill and all thirteen were hurrying down the ladder, Durkin sliding the last few feet. Courageous? How much more so does it become when you learn that the flames had been licking the ladder so viciously *that the top six feet were on fire* when it was lifted away from the building with Durkin still on it in midair?

Thinking the answer might recall some now forgotten scene, I asked the chief, "What was the most thrilling fire you've ever been in?"

Like a shot he answered, "Tomorrow, two weeks ago—The Texas Oil Company Fire."

While it resulted in a loss of less than three hundred thousand dollars, this spectacular conflagration created the greatest fire furore modern Chicago has ever known. Had it escaped control, Mrs. O'Leary's cow might have had a companion in history.

On Sunday morning, July 19th, a gasoline lighter warped into the river-front dock of The Texas Oil Company and began to discharge her cargo of ninety thousand gallons of gasoline and fifteen thousand gallons of lubricating oil. With the pipe lines over the sides and the dangerous fluid pulsing through them, the lighter captain noticed a group of boys building a bonfire outside the fence surrounding the company property. Sensing the danger, he leaped ashore with a shout and raced toward the fire. Even

Two thousand alarms were sent in within an hour and a half after a boy's bonfire started the spectacular conflagration on the Chicago River front, the most thrilling fire in all of Chief Seyferlich's experience. The banks were lined with oil-soaked wooden wharves in a district filled with gas tanks, coal and lumber yards, and stores of gasoline and oil. The Chief was six miles away from the scene of the fire when the first alarm sounded. Six minutes later he was on the job.

as he ran, the oil-soaked earth began to blaze and a trail of fire raced towards the water's edge. Never free from grease and oil, the surface of the Chicago River that morning was like a piece of tinder for it was thickly coated with the drippage from the lighter and the seepage from the adjacent storage yard. There was a flash—and for five hundred feet up and down stream the Chicago River became a sheet of flame from shore to shore! Talk about setting the river on fire!

LINING its banks were oil-soaked wooden wharves. Literally encircled by flames lay the lighter with most of her compartments still undischarged, connected to the storage tanks with inflammable hose! On one side of the oil yard was a soap factory surrounded by nine tanks each containing fifteen thousand gallons of naphtha! On the other side was a coal yard; beyond that a lumber yard, and within the radius of two hundred yards, a score of factories. Behind the soap works towered the two downtown storage tanks of the city gas company, one containing five million cubic feet, the other two million, five hundred thousand cubic feet of cooking gas.

Across the river, again, were more factories and warehouses connected to the water-front by wooden wharves. And all this in the heart of industrial Chicago within a stone's throw of the Loop and its commercial treasure trove!

Up in fire-alarm headquarters where the box alarms sound in and are relayed to all stations, a bedlam ensued—the worst two hours in the memory of the oldest man there with twenty-seven years at the 'phones to his credit.

Everyone, it seems, who caught sight of the first huge billow of smoke that shot skyward, rushed for a fire-alarm box or the telephone. The first alarm came in from a box a full mile from the place. Forty seconds later came another, this time half a mile closer. Then almost simultaneously came nine more scattered boxes, some of them more than half a mile away. Hard on the heels of the box alarms came the "stills" and the telephone calls—no less than two thousand of them in one hour and a half. Imagine the profanity of a panting Irish operator with half the department on a desperate call, taking this message almost two hours after the first alarm had come in. "Did you know there was a big fire down to the river?"

Six minutes after the first box had crashed, a battalion chief had arrived and raced to a 'phone to send in the "4-11." Ten minutes later came the call for five more additional companies and an additional fire-boat and, after a like interval, a second call for more engines. In twenty-six minutes, there were on the job, two fire-boats, the equivalent of eight pumpers, twenty-four regular engine companies, three truck companies and three squad companies—Chicago's largest concentration of fire equipment since the night when the famous "Burlington Fire" called out fifty-one engine companies and their various supports.

When the first and second boxes rang, Chief Seyferlich was at a station six miles away on a tour of inspection with a high English official from the London Fire department. Six minutes later he was in the thick of the fight, having hurtled through the streets at over sixty-five miles an hour. At his elbow until he signaled "fire out" six and a half hours later, hovered the visitor, his impeccable cutaway ruined by sparks, soot and grease, but his impeccable calmness never ruffled. "A cool one," chuckled Seyferlich. " 'My word!' was all he said."

It was probably worth several suits of clothes, not to mention risking his neck, to see how this amazing conflagration was beaten into submission. The fire-boats, sweeping the river with their high-pressure streams, churned the surface into a foam and literally lapped the flames out. Five companies went into action across the river, beating out several fires and drenching unignited property. Eighteen companies drove in among the tanks and lumber piles getting at the heart of the blaze. Across the street from the hottest flames was a six-story warehouse the windows of which were sending down a hailstorm of heat-shattered glass. The twenty-fourth company climbed to its roof and released a literal Niagara, interposing a solid sheet of water between the wall and the radiant heat, thus saving the structure from certain destruction and preserving one solid barrier against the flames in that direction.

When the Tank "Busted Loose"

Acting on instructions, the gas company quickly transferred the contents of the two huge tanks to others in distant parts of the city. This allowed the emptying tanks to sink below the surface. It prevented a possible explosion which would have created havoc among the hundred thousand spectators who were swarming on roofs and taxing the capacity of the nearest bridge spanning the river.

Starting from the outer rim, simultaneously with striking at the heart of the fire—remember the area was large—the firemen first held the flames and then began to drive them back foot by foot. At the water's edge, the lighter was an Inferno which no fireman was allowed to approach. Any one or all of the tanks in the hold might explode instead of continuing, as they were, to blaze fiercely and harmlessly. So long as the heat was only great enough to open the seams they would release spewing liquid fire into the river, where the fire-boats were quickly smothering it. Six of these tanks had already split and were burning openly, when the seventh let go! With the roar of a gigantic rocket and a deafening crash, it catapulted skyward in an awesome arc. Hurtling through the air like a red hot meteor, it dropped hissing, but harmless, into the river. That marked the climax. From then on it was a question of man power, water, and persistence.

But about that time, Chief Seyferlich, standing beneath a protecting canopy and directing operations, was approached by a somewhat perturbed man. "Chief," he said, "I'm the superintendent here. Thought you'd like to know that concrete platform *you're standing on* is the top of a tank that's got *two hundred thousand gallons of gasoline!* And I'm not sure if the valves at the end of the feed lines down there are closed!"

"So?" answered Seyferlich according to a man at his elbow. "H'm. Suppose we walk down and see that they're closed." They were.

The chief leaned back in his chair, shook his head and whistled softly, "Ten minutes made all the difference. If we hadn't got there when we did and succeeding in preventing a serious explosion—well, I guess you would be talking to some other chief and a lot of fire insurance companies would have been broke, or badly bent. A fire just as big, if not bigger, and more destructive than the big one in 1871 was not an impossibility for a while."

Another comparatively recent Chicago fire proved the inflammability of much supposed fireproof construction. In 1922 a manufacturing building, long a sore spot with the department's fire prevention bureau, and constantly expected to be the scene of a severe fire, was discovered in flames—so thoroughly afire, that the official board of underwriters' report openly hinted at incendiarism.

Progressing with unbelievable rapidity, the flames were soon attacking eleven buildings, two of them a full block away from the origin of the fire. Several of the buildings were one- and two-story structures, but most of them ranged from four to eight stories in height. As the flames spread, additional apparatus was called out until, in less than an hour and a quarter after the first alarm, fifty-one pumpers were at work pouring into the blaze, with the aid of two fire-boats, no less than sixteen thousand eight hundred gallons of water a minute.

Diagonally across the street from the blazing block, stood the comparatively new steel and terra cotta fifteen-story office building of the Burlington Railroad. So fierce was the heat, that it soon ignited the wooden window frames of this skyscraper from the ninth floor up. Simultaneously, there were eight separate and distinct fires in that one building. Each was ignited by radiant heat—and sparks after the windows had melted; each was confined to a single floor; each burned fiercely, consuming desks, wooden floors, contents of filing cabinets which quickly fell apart, and each had to be fought separately from within. The fierceness of the temperature inside is indicated by the fact that cast-iron pipes were fused and brass, untouched by the flames, had been melted by the heat from the burning group of buildings over a hundred and twenty feet away.

While the blaze was at its height, a little group of firemen was to be seen carrying boxes in between the buildings lying to the south and west. Fortunately, the contents of those boxes did not have to be used to prevent a catastrophe even greater than the one which was causing loss in excess of two hundred million dollars.

In the boxes was dynamite—the last resort.

The ancient adage which says "There is no telling about human nature" is no truer than when the excitement of a fire causes people to discard all balance, judgment, and reason.

Chief Seyferlich tells of a young woman who was trapped with her invalid mother on the third floor of a large apartment building. She appeared at the window screaming. Shouts from the ground told her to prepare to jump. As the life net was being prepared, she rushed with a gesture of despair past her mother to another room where she seized two lap dogs which she crammed into a valise. Returning, she clambered on the sill and leaped, with the valise clasped to her breast. When her wave of temporary insanity passed and she learned that she had deserted her mother who had been burned to death, she went mad.

There are countless incidents of people who, in a frenzy to save their belongings, throw bric-a-brac and mirrors out of third-floor windows and then stagger downstairs with an armful of blankets and clothing, or even sofa pillows. One man rushed up three flights of smoke-charged stairs and then came rushing back with vociferous shouts of, "Gimme room, gimme room! Here I come!"

Thinking that he was bringing out at least a baby or some treasured *objet d'art*, the crowd tensely waited his arrival—to be convulsed when he catapulted from the front door with a fully charged fire extinguisher from the third floor hallway over his shoulder!

Even more amusing are those people who presume that the fire department, being supported by taxes, can be put to any number of incidental uses. Women seem to be the most frequent offenders. One of them called up and gushed this message into the operator's ear:

"Is this the fire department? Oh, I am so glad! I am Mrs. So-and-So at 100 Blank Street, second floor. I am downtown shopping and it looks like rain. I've left the windows in the living-room open. Won't you please send up a hook and ladder to have them closed?" You can imagine the answer she received.

Scarcely a day passes without a request to pull cats out of trees, to go on a still hunt for stray canaries, to snake stubborn dogs from beneath buildings, and what not. Once the department relented and sent up a rescue squad to help capture a very valuable parrot, which had escaped and was taunting its frantic owner from a tree just out of reach. The best climber in the squad shinned up the tree and edged toward him along the branch. "C'mere, Polly," he cooed. "Polly want a cracker?"

"Go to Hell'!' advised Polly, flopping to the next tree. The squad went home instead.

One Call that Gets Results

There is, however, one call that always gets prompt action in Chicago, and everywhere else, I suppose. And that call is, "Our baby's locked himself in the bathroom and we can't make him open the door. He's crying terribly!" Remember that, should the occasion arise in your home. It always gets results.

If you are curious as to whether your house, when it burns, is going to burn in the morning or evening, you may be interested to learn that the chances are two to one in favor of the latter. Also that the hour is more liable to be 5 P.M. than any other. In Chicago, according to the last annual statistics compiled, there were three times as many fires at 5 P.M., the busiest hour, as at 5 A.M., the quietest one. The same averages show that January to April is the rush quarter, with April leading all other months; and September to December the duller quarter with September showing less than half as many fires as April. As for the busiest of days, as you might expect, it is Friday—cleaning day.

In search of local color, I loafed about fire-alarm headquarters from one in the afternoon until 10 P.M., waiting for an alarm that would give me an opportunity to "ride the wagon" with the chief. I might have said "pretty soft life, this." But I knew that on an average day the central office sees sixty alarms sent in and relayed—and relayed with unbelievable swiftness, too! On this particular stretch, however, there were only five fire alarms, two "boxes" and three "stills," all of them first alarm smudges that were "struck out" in a few minutes.

"Stick around," they advised me. "It's quiet like this for a while and then they come in altogether. We'll have a good one for you yet."

Came train time and I departed without the thrill of a ride through the Loop at fifty miles an hour. Two days later, I received an envelope printed in red "Fire Department" and bearing a Chicago postmark. In it was a section torn from a Chicago paper of the day following my visit. That section showed three fire photographs and part of a headline, "FLAMES SWEEP LUMBER YARD. $1,000,000 LOSS IN . . .

On the margin was penciled "You were just twenty-four hours ahead of time. Too bad! A. R. S."

By
Frank Hough

Double

An unassuming youth deals

THE college career of Harold Lucius Hawkes lasted approximately two years. It was an unequal struggle from the first, and the faculty won, as faculties generally will. Still, half a career is better than none, and those two years wrought certain changes in the last of the Hawkes. Notable among these was the change in haberdashery from Sears-Roebuck to Langrock and the change in accent from central Ohio yokel to the New Haven equivalent of Piccadilly. Such other changes as occurred incidentally were just about as deep-seated as the two mentioned.

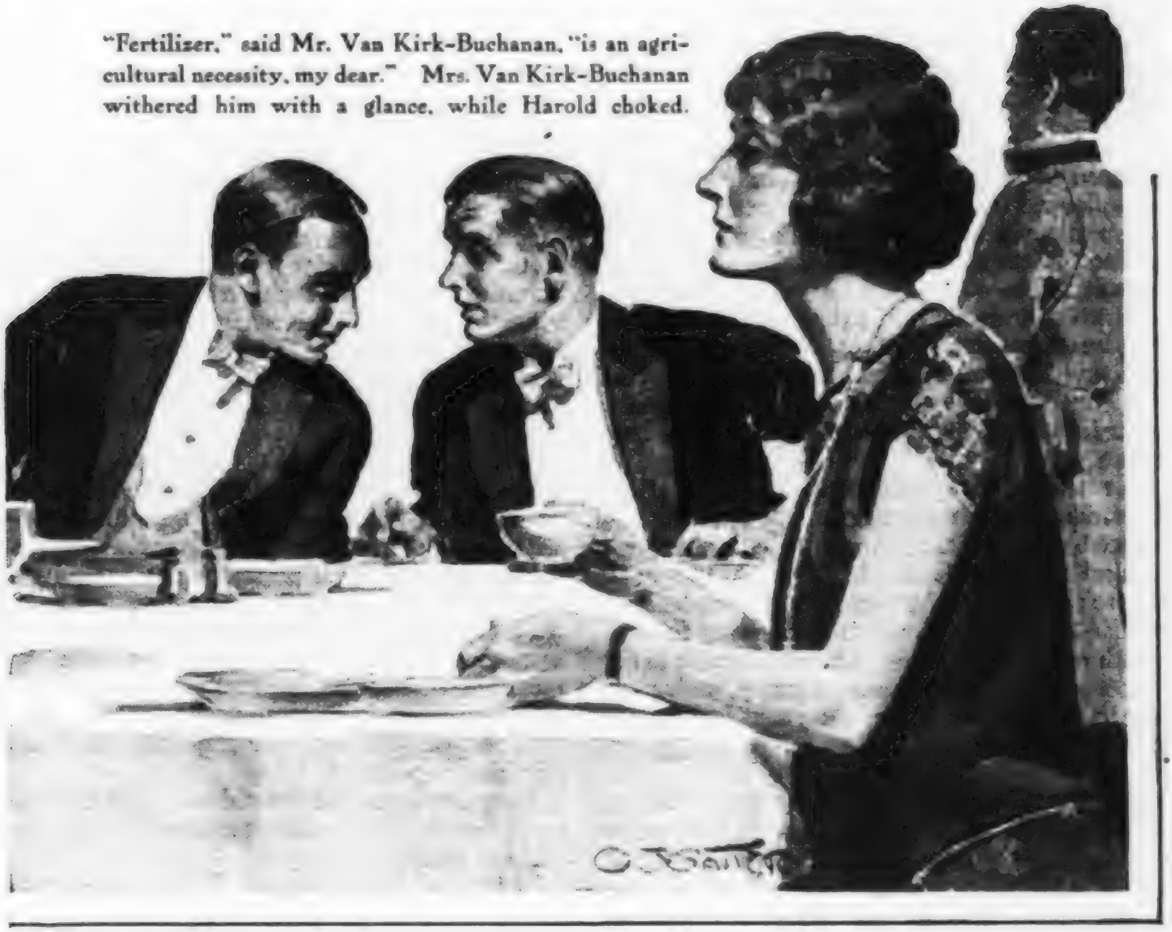
Harold had come out of the West; the Middle-West, to be exact, Arkos, Ohio, to be still more exact. And he stayed out of the West. His father, old Enos Hawkes, had piled up a tidy fortune in the manufacture of fertilizer. He was the richest man for miles around, and his factory had put the little town on the map. But Harold had aspirations; he had begun to find the small-town atmosphere confining even before he ventured East. Those people out there had known him all his life. They had long memories and sharp tongues; they, his schoolmates in particular, had not treated him with the respect which seemed due the son of the town's wealthiest citizen. No, the East was the place for him; the effete East where the gold begins and Tuxedos are worn to dinner.

The same spring that saw the termination of his abortive education brought him, through the death of his father, the controlling interest in the Eureka Fertilizer Company, now grown

Canfield

Illustrated
by O. J. Gatter

a face card from his sleeve



"Fertilizer," said Mr. Van Kirk-Buchanan, "is an agricultural necessity, my dear." Mrs. Van Kirk-Buchanan withered him with a glance, while Harold choked.

into the largest and most powerful organization of its kind in the entire Middle-West. The stock, Harold discovered, brought ready money on the market and, having an instinctive abhorrence of fertilizer, he managed to dispose of a good part of his holdings before old Enos's lawyer succeeded in pointing out to him that dividends are dividends, whether they come from fertilizer or Park Avenue real estate, and that Eureka common, then paying twenty per cent., was not to be laughed off lightly, no matter how it jarred on one's sensibilities. So Harold had "dug in," financially speaking, and had spent the first two years following his involuntary departure from New Haven in the earnest endeavor to live down the fertilizer and live up to his income from it.

It was on a sweltering day in early July during the second of these years, that he happened to stroll into the New Haven Club. He held his head even a trifle higher than usual and allowed his chest to expand to its full thirty-three inches. Figuratively speaking, he was walking on air, for in the inside pocket of his coat there rested a note, brought in that morning's mail, which spelled to Harold the fulfillment of one of his dearest ambitions. It has become an axiom that any one with a Tuxedo can "crash" a New York débutante party. But to get an invitation for a week's visit at the home of one of the most élite of the élite families—ah, that was something different again!

The hour was nearing four and a scattering of members were grouped about the big lounge enjoying afternoon tea, most of which appeared to come in pints. Harold glanced casually about in search of any chance acquaintance.

At a table near at hand sat a pair engrossed in a bottle of gin. One of them appeared faintly familiar. Harold took heart and approached. Gin, he had discovered, was a great aid toward scraping up an acquaintance. What he failed to take into consideration, however, was that this great fundamental truth rested entirely upon the ownership of said gin. He had seen this particular individual at several of the previous winter's deb parties. Obviously he must be somebody worth knowing.

"Ah, there," remarked Harold, beaming down from the height of his five feet-six and resting a friendly hand upon the shoulder nearest him.

The owner of the shoulder glanced up. He glanced over Harold casually from head to foot and glanced down again. Then he reached for the bottle of gin, placed it carefully out of sight under the table, and resumed his interrupted conversation.

Harold drew himself up even higher. His hand sought the envelope in his inside coat pocket. The feel of it lent him strength. Just wait until the news of this got out! No glassy stare for him then. It meant the end of the long climb.

He turned away haughtily, only to pause in sudden blank astonishment. His eye had lighted upon another form, modestly secluded behind a card table in a far corner of the room. There could be no mistake. That rumpled hair which looked as though it had never felt the touch of brush or comb; that outlandish heliotrope necktie which hung directly under the starboard ear; that baggy suit; that bland, sunburned face. . . .

HAROLD strode across the room. "Why, Jerry Butler!" he exclaimed, his surprise overcoming for a moment his studiously cultivated poise.

The other looked up leisurely. "Hello, Slush," he returned without surprise or noticeable enthusiasm.

Harold frowned in annoyance. How that nickname carried him back to the old Arkos school days! It was some sort of a far-fetched corruption of his middle name: Lucius—Luscious—just plain Slush. He had never been able entirely to rid himself of it—at least, not in Arkos. Now it had the effect of checking rather abruptly the unbecoming surprise that had carried him away for a moment.

He eyed the other coldly and ignored the half-hearted hand which had been stretched across the table toward him.

"What are you doing here—in the New Haven Club?" he demanded sharply.

The one addressed as Jerry subsided into the chair from which he had half risen and regarded the cards spread out on the table. "I am playing," he admitted after due consideration, "a game of Canfield."

Harold considered this from various angles. "Oh," he said.

"And," continued Jerry, turning up three cards from the pack in his hand, "I am waiting for some one."

Harold considered this also. Who could Jerry Butler possibly know from New Haven? No one worth while, certainly! Jerry, he recollected, had come East to college at the same time that he had. But, he recalled, there were rumors afloat to the effect that Jerry had made the trip on the blind baggage. It was only natural that he should, if he were to get East at all. They were dirt poor, those Butlers. His mother, a widow with five children, ran the drummer's hotel out there in Arkos. She could hardly be expected to send her oldest to college in a Pullman and then support him there in the manner to which he would like to become accustomed. As Harold recalled, Jerry had gone to some smaller New England college, less expensive than New Haven, and had been obliged to work his way through, at that. Well, that was commendable, he must admit, but—different.

He glanced about the room uneasily. He was reluctant to have any of his acquaintances, or prospective acquaintances, see him talking with this outlandishly dressed yokel. But at the same time he was possessed of a curiosity—morbid, he would call it—regarding Jerry and the folks back in Arkos generally. Vaguely he wondered if they really appreciated the tremendous transformation that four years in the East had wrought in him.

"Are you waiting," he inquired, "for any one I know possibly?"

Jerry shrugged his shoulders. "I am waiting," he said, "for a fellow named Donneley—Chick Donneley."

"Hum'm," mused Harold. "The name sounds faintly familiar."

Jerry played out the ace of diamonds. "He played football," he observed. "Was in your class."

Harold frowned. "Well, I'll tell you," he said with a confidential air, "I didn't bother with the football crowd very much. Bounders, most of them; chaps with athletic reputations taking advantage of their positions to meet people—the right sort of people, you know. Now your friend Donneley, for instance, I saw him at several of the débutante parties this past winter. And his father, mind you—his father is a caterer!"

Jerry regarded the cards in his hand. "My, my!" he observed drily without looking up. Then he added as an afterthought, "He's getting married in the fall, you know. Nice girl. Name's Winter—Nancy Winter."

Harold started. Nancy Winter had just

come out last season. In fact, it had been at her party that some usher had presented him to Mrs. Harry Terrill, and incidentally, given him one of the biggest thrills of his life.

"Is that so?" he exclaimed with something like real warmth. "Fancy that! I'd like to see good old Chick again."

A new face appeared in the doorway for a moment, glanced about, and withdrew. Harold stirred uneasily. That had been Bob Lanning. Lucky he had not seen Harold in his present company.

"Must be trotting along," he declared. "Awfully glad to have seen you again."

"So long," said Jerry.

Still Harold lingered. "I'd like to hear all about the old town sometime," he said, glancing about furtively. "Can't we get together somewhere and talk it over? How about next week sometime?"

Jerry picked up the cards, stacked them, and commenced to shuffle. "Sorry," he said at length. "I'm going away next week."

"Why!" exclaimed Harold, his memory suddenly prodded. "Why, so am I! How careless of me!" His hand flew to his inside coat pocket. Careless was no word for it! And what a chance to make an impression, not only on Jerry but on the folks out in Arkos where Jerry would be going next week! He weighed his words carefully. "I've been invited," he said, "to spend the week at the Van Kirk-Buchanan's."

"The—who?" Jerry had raised his eyes from the table for the first time. Obviously he was impressed. Ah, the magic of a name! Who, in the entire width of the country, had not heard of the Van Kirk-Buchanans?"

"The Van Kirk-Buchanans," Harold repeated, rolling the words lovingly from his tongue. "Augustus Van Kirk-Buchanan—'Gus,' we call him. Nice old chap. The—ah—financier, you know."

JERRY nodded somewhat stupidly. "Big society people, aren't they?" he asked. "Seems as though I saw something about them in the paper this morning. Haven't they a daughter?"

"Oh, yes," Harold responded airily. "Her picture was in the *Tribune*. Nice girl." A sudden inspiration seized him. He leaned closer confidentially. "Kindly don't repeat this," he urged. "It isn't known yet—not even in our set. Of course, with you it doesn't make any difference. Well, Miss Van Kirk-Buchanan—Catherine and I—"

"I thought," said Jerry, "that her name was Margery. The paper said—"

"No, no! Harold interjected hastily. "Catherine. Well, Catherine and I—we're engaged!"

There was a moment of silence. Jerry continued to riffle the cards in his hands.

"Congratulations," he observed at length.

Harold waved an airy hand. "Thanks!" he said. He paused in sudden horror. Bob Lanning had entered, had seen him; was coming directly across the room toward him.

He turned away quickly. "Well, bye-bye—ah—Butler," he flung back over his shoulder, hurrying forward to meet his acquaintance.

"Who," demanded Lanning, "is that—that person?"

Harold grasped his arm and propelled him toward the door. "A chap I used to know slightly out West," he explained.

"What peculiar clothes," Lanning remarked glancing backward as though fascinated.

Harold hurried him across the room. From behind, faintly carried to their ears above the buzz of polite conversation, that dry voice carried. "So long, Slush. See you again some time," called Jerry Butler, dealing himself another game. . . .

The Van Kirk-Buchanan country place was situated a few discreet miles outside of the town of Port Huron, somewhere in the more exclusive open spaces of the Long Island North Shore. It was white and rambling, English to the expert or even the pedantic eye, and crouched among trees on the far side of a broad, well-kept green lawn which was pleasantly relieved by shrubs. It was unpretentious and in the best of taste; but, at first glance, Harold was a little disappointed.

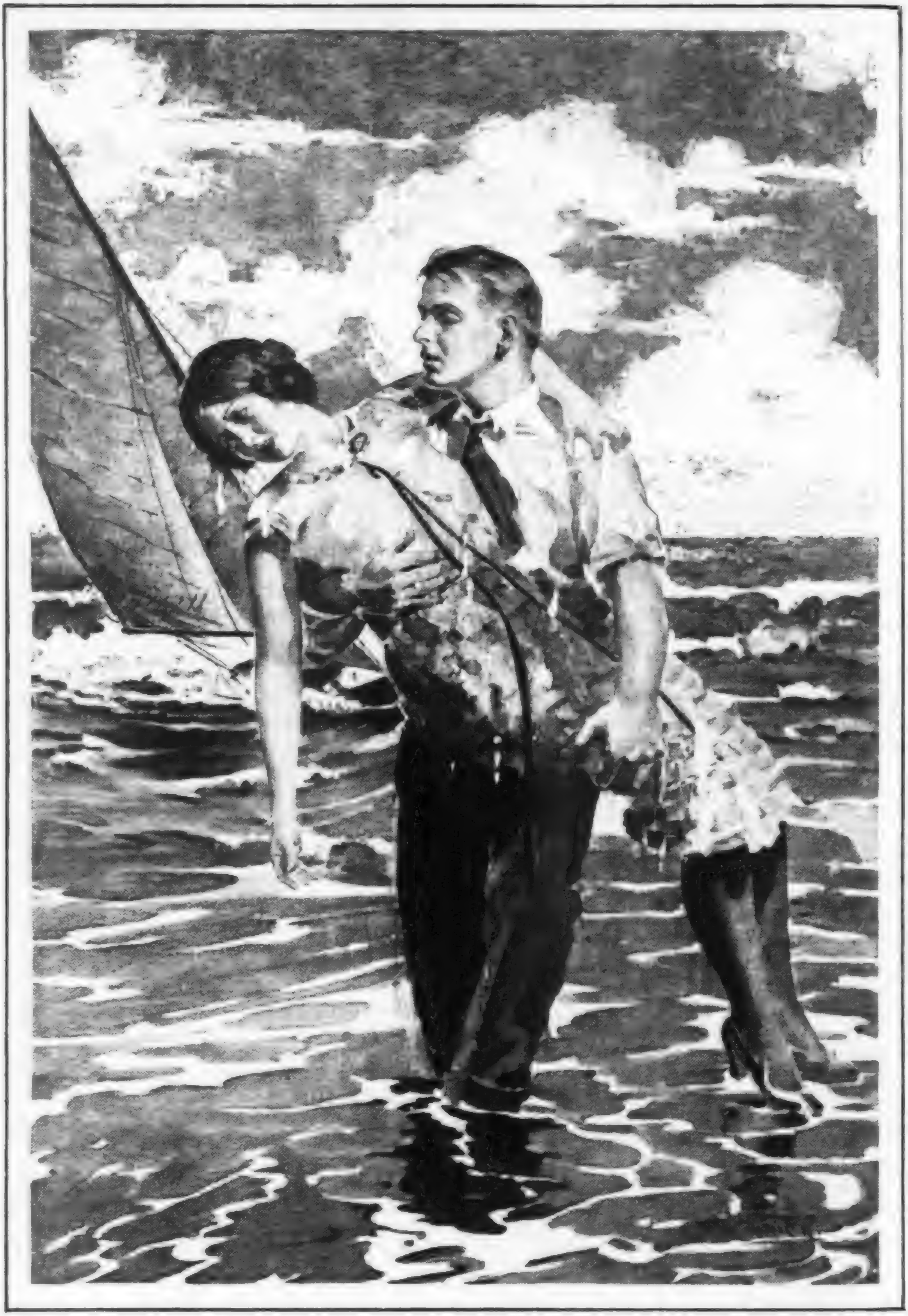
However, when the Van Kirk-Buchanan chauffeur had handed him from the Van Kirk-Buchanan motor before the sacred façade, and an imposing number of Van Kirk-Buchanan menservants had descended upon his luggage like Grand Central porters, he was aware of a pleasant glow of satisfaction. So pleasant was this feeling that it was only with difficulty that he restrained himself from shaking hands with the Van Kirk-Buchanan butler as he was ushered into the Van Kirk-Buchanan hallway.

His host was on hand to do the honors. He was a short, corpulent man in his early fifties, upon whose ruddy face there rested a habitual expression of cherubic innocence; an expression which some of his business acquaintances, soured by the realities of life in general and of Wall Street in particular, were prone to declare was belying.

Now, as he approached his guest, he seemed fairly to exude cheerful hospitality. "Ah, Mr. Hawkes!" he cried genially. "Delighted! Delighted, I'm sure!" Then apologetically, "I hope you won't be too bored with us here. The simple life, you know."

Harold glanced about at the hurrying servants and the tasteful but sumptuous interior. "Oh, not at all," he murmured.

Suddenly his thoughts were scattered to the winds. An apparition—a vision, nothing less. Clad all in white, she floated down the broad



Margery felt the water drop beneath her as he raised her struggling form. She felt the sweetness of being safe after the thrill of the storm. "Honey," said Jerry softly.

stairway. So small! Dancing hair of sun-touched gold; gray eyes; piquant, tip-tilted nose; tiny feet; slim, rounded calves which melted just below the knees into soft silk that held illusions. Harold caught his breath ecstatically.

"Ah," purred Van Kirk-Buchanan. "I don't believe you've met. Mr. Hawkes, my daughter—Margery."

Harold bowed. He felt a cool, firm hand in his. So small! Cool gray eyes appraising him from head to foot. Clear eyes and deep. But his vocal cords were numbed.

"And another of my guests whom you must meet," Van Kirk-Buchanan's voice purred on. "Mr. —"

The name was lost on Harold. What mattered other guests? Reluctantly he tore his eyes away and turned.

Just inside of what appeared to be the drawing-room was a solitary figure with a pack of cards. Harold's jaw gaped stupidly. A heliotrope necktie underneath the starboard ear—hair that looked a stranger to the brush and comb—

"Hello, Slush," said Jerry Butler absently, and turned up the ace of hearts.

MR. VAN KIRK-BUCHANAN leaned against the wall of his wife's boudoir. An expression of pensiveness was in his innocent eyes.

"Augustus," said Mrs. Van Kirk-Buchanan from the depths of her chaise-longue, "of all the perfectly impossible people who have ever visited Port Huron upon your invitation, I truly believe that the present pair is the limit."

"Amelia," her spouse made answer mildly, "you are an unmitigated snob."

Mrs. V. K.-B. fluttered helpless hands. "I am not a snob," she whined. "But what if I am? I really can't see why you should humiliate Margery and me in this way. It makes me positively ill to have my friends see me in the company of such persons! I—I feel ill right now," she ended mournfully.

Her husband's eyes twinkled. They were shrewd, those eyes, upon careful inspection. "There, there, my dear," he soothed. "It will only be for a week. And they are really nice boys—both of them. Just wait until you know them a little better."

Mrs. Van Kirk-Buchanan straightened so suddenly that she nearly fell from her seat. "Augustus!" she exclaimed. "How can you talk that way? You've said, yourself, that they were both utterly impossible! I've heard you a dozen times. One of them acts and talks like a silly ass, and the other does nothing but play a silly game of solitaire. I haven't heard him say a dozen words in the past two days. I don't believe he knows a dozen words."

Her husband took her hand and patted it reassuringly. "They have—ah—a certain attraction, Amelia," he assured her. "It may not be aesthetic or social, but it's there. I don't have such people out here for nothing, you know."

She glanced quickly at his face. It was as bland and cherubic as ever and his blue eyes were innocent.

"I know you don't, Augustus," she said reminiscently. "But—oh, it's such a strain to be polite and to do the correct thing! I have a perfectly diabolic desire to insult them. I'm sure I shall some time. I refuse to see any more of them than is absolutely necessary in my capacity of hostess."

Augustus smiled. "Exactly right, my dear," he purred. "The less you see of them, the better—for all parties concerned."

With which enigmatical remark he left her. But Amelia was not inclined to ponder over enigmas. In fact, she was seldom inclined to ponder at all.

Margery stepped out upon the broad veranda and paused. Her lips formed instinctively into a pout of distaste as her gray eyes lighted upon the complacent form of Jerry parked before a card table in the middle distance. Finally, as though impelled by some impulse, she turned and strode toward him, her tiny flat heels pounding quick staccato raps upon the boards. Presently she stood above him and glanced down.

Jerry nodded a casual "Good morning," and resumed his absorbing Canfield game. Margery's irritation mounted higher.

"If you forgot to bring your pajamas," she observed coldly, "I should be only too glad to lend you a pair of mine."

Jerry glanced up and nodded urbanely. "You're awfully kind," he drawled. "But, really, I much prefer my nightshirt."

"Ugh!" cried Margery with an involuntary shudder.

Jerry resumed his game. "It's really a very nice nightshirt," he declared. "I bought it at Macy's."

Margery recovered herself and elevated her piquant nose an inch or two higher. "I had thought from appearances," she said icily, "that you slept in the suit you have on."

Jerry glanced over the outfit in question with some interest. "Oh, no," he answered blandly. "That would spoil the press."

Suddenly Margery laughed. Margery's laugh was light and lilting. It bubbled from her spontaneously; it thawed the unaccustomed iciness from her manner; it made her seem extremely young and infinitely pretty.

She drew up a near-by chair, sank into its depths, and from this point of vantage fell to scrutinizing her companion with some curiosity.

"You know," she remarked after a moment, "I sometimes wonder if you really are such a hopeless ass as you usually seem to be."

Jerry paused with a card in mid-air. He allowed it to sink back to the table, unplayed. "I sometimes wonder that myself," he mused. "You think me an ass because I wear sloppy clothes and don't have much to say. You think Slush—I mean, Harold—an ass because he wears ultra-Brooks clothes and talks his head off. And I suppose you're perfectly right, at that."

Margery's eyes opened a trifle wider. This was more, from the purely numerical standpoint of words, than she had heard Jerry say the entire two days he had been there. His voice, she noticed, was soft and rather pleasing. It seemed to expand his entire personality and to animate to some extent the blandness of his face.

"I don't think," she murmured thoughtfully, "that you're so bad, after all."

Jerry had resumed his game. "Thanks!" he answered drily.

She watched him pensively for several moments. He finished his game, riffled the cards, and leisurely dealt them again.

"I've watched you for the last two days," she said at length. "And I'm trying to figure out what else you do besides play Canfield."

"I make bets with myself on each hand," he told her. "And I reflect upon the vagaries of a silly world, and sometimes I wonder where my next meal is going to come from when I leave here. In between times, whenever I have the chance, I look at you. I like the dress you had on yesterday better than the one you have on now."

"Oh! The little white one? Why?"

HE SHRUGGED. "It's more becoming," he said, and returned to his game. The cards rose and fell mechanically.

"You're quite an enigma," Margery mused. "Who ever would have thought that you took an interest in my clothes? You never mentioned it before."

Jerry played a black five on a red six. He turned up the nine of clubs. "You didn't ask me," he observed. Then after a moment: "You don't look like your picture."

"That one in the *Tribune?* I should hope not!"

"It didn't show the titian in your hair," Jerry said. "I didn't think you could have lost that in two years."

Margery started and her gray eyes opened wider. "Two years!" she exclaimed. "Why, where did you ever see me before?"

Jerry did not look up. "Class Day up at Nicholas, two years ago," he said. "I danced with you. You had lilac in your hair."

"Nicholas College? Why, that's where Daddy went! Horrid little place! Daddy is a loyal alumnus, or whatever you call it. He gave the place an endowment fund so that they could get a lot of roughnecks up there to play football. That Class Day was Daddy's thirtieth reunion. He made me come along and dance with all his hard-boiled protégés. Of course, I danced with some others, too, but I don't remember you."

Jerry smiled a little sourly. "I was one of the protégés," he observed. "Your father's money helped me to get through."

There was a second's silence. Then. "Oh, are you a football man?" Margery cried. "Why didn't you tell me?"

"You didn't ask me," he said drily and turned up another card.

Absently Margery watched him. Her mind was wandering to other things. Curiosity was strong in her and for the past two days she had been racking her mind for the possible reason for the presence here of two such aliens to her environment as Jerry and Harold. Possibly here lay the clue to the presence of the former.

"I suppose," she ventured presently, "that is why Daddy asked you down here for this week. If not, then why?"

Jerry played the next two cards. "I play Canfield with myself," he told her. "And between times I wonder that very thing. The echo answers, 'Why?' "

"And I," Margery reflected, "play tennis with Harold, and play golf with Harold, and take Harold sailing in my catboat and between times and during times I wonder why *he* was ever invited down. Harold is terrible at tennis and golf, and as a sailor he is a total loss."

She paused to reflect. "He's a bore," she continued after the reflection was complete. "And he's a pest—doesn't give me a moment's peace the whole day through. He'll be out here any minute; you wait and see. But what can I do? Daddy said to be nice to him—to you, too. Sorry I haven't been nicer to you now that I know you better. It's Harold's fault. He's been an awful strain."

The echo still answered, "Why?" Margery's curiosity reached for further clues.

"What do you do for a living?" she inquired when no word had come from him. "I mean when you're not playing Canfield."

"Nothing," he returned. "I'll be looking for a job when I pull out of here."

There was a moment's pause.

"Do you know anything about—fertilizer?" Margery asked at length, letting the last word fall with obvious distaste.

Jerry played two more cards, uncovered an ace and played its deuce and trey upon it.

"No," he said without raising his eyes.

"Nasty stuff!" said Margery, "but I've heard it's a profitable business." She noticed that he made two misplays; she noticed that his attention appeared to be neither on his game nor on her. She felt a sudden twinge of satisfaction.

A figure rounded the turn of the drive and started across the lawn. The sun glinted back from the screaming checks of golf hose, from the bizarre pattern of a bright blue sweater.

Margery's pensiveness fell from her. She galvanized into action. "Harold!" she cried springing to her feet. "I *told* you he'd show up!" she finished in a tone almost of accusation.

"Yes," said Jerry. "Harold has a habit of showing up."

"If I have to stand another minute of that fool's company, I shall go crazy!" Margery declared desperately. "Hurry! Let's get out of sight. We'll go places and do things—play golf or something. But hurry!"

Jerry rose to his feet with surprising alacrity. "I think," he observed, "that I should like to take a little drive in your car. And we might go by the telegraph office. I've got to send wires to a couple of friends."

"Anywhere!" Margery cried. "But hurry! . . . I didn't know you had any friends to send wires to," she added as they scurried into the garage.

He held open the door of her compact little roadster. "You didn't ask me," he returned.

DINNER at the Van Kirk-Buchanan's was a solemn affair. Mrs. V. K-B. presided over the function with a certain regal dignity which was not to be offset even by the bland, cherubic features of her spouse at the other end of the long table. The butler or the second man—or perhaps it was the third or fourth—moved stealthily about, removing things, bringing on other things to be removed in turn.

Late arrival was considered a faux pas of the worst kind, but arrive late was exactly what Jerry and Margery did that evening. Furthermore, they had not been on hand for luncheon, much to the annoyance of Harold. Now as they entered the room—Amelia had not troubled herself to wait dinner for them—the arctic quality of the atmosphere seemed to become perceptibly intensified.

Harold, however, appeared oblivious to the prevailing atmospheric conditions. He fairly exuded conversation. His remarks rebounded from the high ceiling, from the hard shell of his hostess, with an unfazeable persistence, punctuated now and then by the discreet rattle of an occasional—very occasional—dish which the butler—second, third or fourth man, as the case might be—was so careless as to let slip, and by the not so occasional clang of Jerry's butter knife.

Harold had the floor, so to speak. Mr. Van Kirk-Buchanan had made some remark about his lawn. The gardener was having difficulty in keeping it in its wonted state of greenness this season. Not enough rain, he said. All Harold needed was a hint. He could hold forth by the hour on any subject—or no subject at all; preferably the latter.

Suddenly Jerry spoke. Deliberately he raised his eyes from his plate where they had rested consistently during all meals for the past three days. So far as any of them could remember, this was the first time he had spoken at the dinner table except to murmur discreetly, "Bread, please."

"What that lawn of yours needs," he declared, "is more fertilizer."

There was a second of appalled silence. Mrs. Van Kirk-Buchanan stiffened, seeming to creak brittly in every joint. Harold broke off in the middle of a sentence with an adjective dangling in mid-air while his jaw gaped stupidly. Across the table Margery glanced up and veiled her eyes in thought.

"Yes," pursued Jerry, oblivious to the stir, "the rain isn't to blame. You can always sprinkle a lawn and you generally have to whether it rains or not. The trouble is that the soil is playing out. A little good, old-fashioned fertilizer would fix it up first rate. Am I right, Slush?" he appealed, turning to Harold.

Harold gulped. He drew himself up haughtily. "I'm sure," he stated with icy finality, "that I know nothing whatever about the nasty stuff."

"Why—" he began in naïve surprise. He paused. The frigid façade of his hostess was showing signs of life.

"I am quite certain," she declared loftily, "that we can find subjects more appropriate for dinner table conversation than—than—" She was unable to speak the hateful word.

"Fertilizer," supplied her husband cheerfully. "It's an agricultural necessity, my dear. Without it we would have no crops. And besides, it's a highly profitable business, I am told."

She withered him with a glance. "I cannot see that business or agriculture has anything whatever to do with the innate qualities of—ah—fertilizer," she said. "It is an unpleasant subject and I am sure that it must be a most unpleasant business."

"But there's good money in it, my dear."

"Augustus, I do wish that you would allow your mind to rise above your pocketbook, occasionally. I have always maintained that a man's character is molded very largely by the business in which he participates, and I am quite certain that respectable men—true gentlemen from the really good families—would never permit themselves to enter such a business, no matter how lucrative the returns might be." She turned appealingly to Harold, the only one of the listeners from whom possible sympathy might be expected. "I am sure that you will agree with me, Mr. Hawkes," she almost commanded.

Harold choked. His face turned purple, partly with confusion and partly with pride that *he* should be selected to uphold the better families.

[*Continued on page 149*]

Albee *of the* Keith Circuit

In his forty years as a showman, E. F. Albee has rescued vaudeville from the cheap environment of the disreputable theater in a side street. His acts are now booked in over two hundred theaters

by Mary Stewart Cutting, Jr.

A VAUDEVILLE program such as we may see in any American city today represents the accumulated experience from hundreds of experiments. The first act is generally a silent one, aërial or acrobatic, so that the late comers will not distract the attention of the audience already seated. The strongest comedy act is usually put in next to the closing position to hold patrons for the last act. In between these points every number on the bill has a reason for its particular position with relation to the others on the program.

"THE first wagon show I ever traveled with," said Mr. Albee, theatrical magnate, "was Burr Robbin's. A few days after I joined it, at the age of sixteen, I had an amusing adventure.

"When we came to a town we generally stopped by the bank of a river or stream where the wagons could be washed. The place, at break of day, would resemble a gypsy camp. All kinds of contrivances were used for shaving, and after everyone had polished up shoes and clothes, and breakfast was over, the parade would form.

"This day the show came to a little town and camped on a lot which was separated from the main street by a shallow river. The river had an easy embankment running up to the lot on one side and to the main street on the other. After breakfast the procession, in which everybody took part, started. My assignment was to ride a camel, and wear a frog's suit and head. As the procession lagged or caught up, I found this somewhat difficult. The frog's head kept wobbling around this way and that, so that I could not see where I was going, except in moments when the animal fell into a regular stride. Then I could release my hands from the saddle and adjust the head. Finally, the parade came down the main street again and opposite the circus lot.

"Then," said Mr. Albee, "the camel began to amble, the frog's head to turn, and I felt myself going down the embankment into the river. My legs struck the water, and the camel bellowed. He kept on bellowing. I couldn't decide what he wanted, but thought it might be a drink, so I released the reins and the crosspiece, and he drank. But what he really desired was to get back to the circus lot. He wended his way there in leisurely fashion, leaving the parade to take care of itself! Of course, I was the butt of hilarity from the townspeople, and of kidding from members of the show."

It is a far cry from the awkward youth who broke into the show business astride a bawling camel to the man who sat in a high-backed carved chair in his office above the Palace Theater in New York's roaring forties. The room with its dark tones and walls hung with photographs and one or two choice paintings had, in the soft light of afternoon, more the aspect of a study than the central point of the big business that it is.

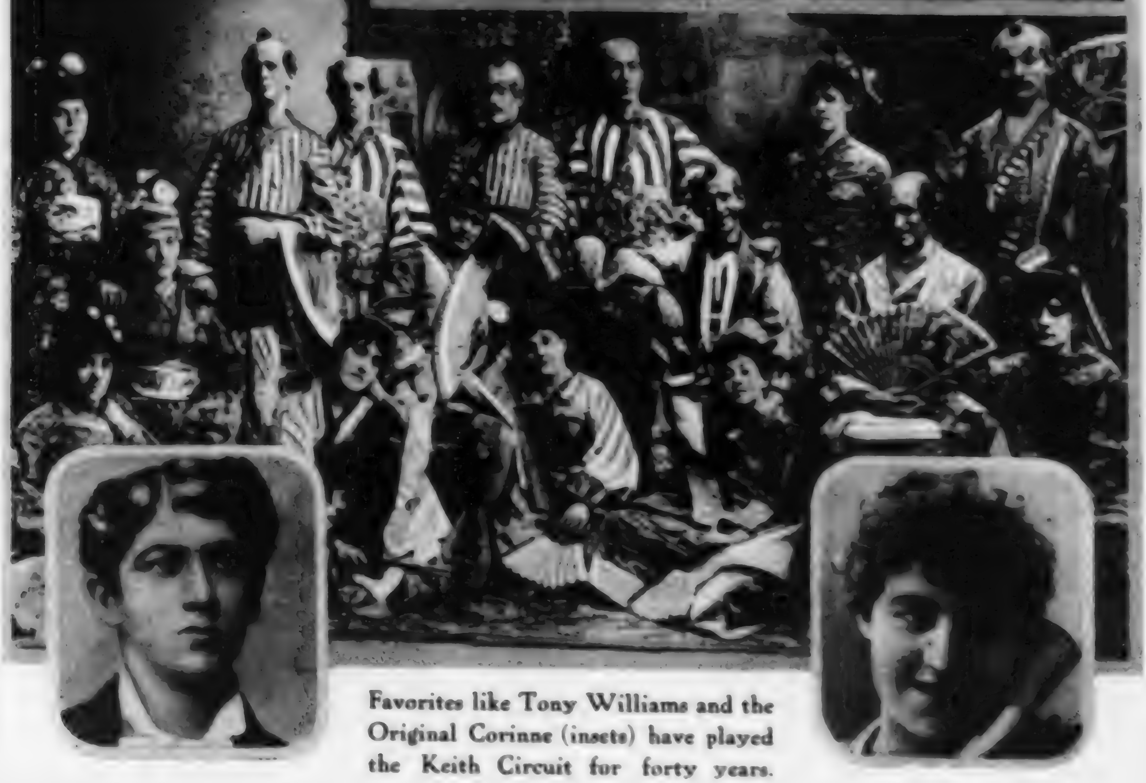
Mr. Albee's greeting gives an immediate impression of his strength and power, and more—a dignified unaffectedness. He has the quality of understanding that is characteristic of largeness and quickness of mind. You feel in him a whole world of concentrated action.

Some forty years ago, Mr. Albee started vaudeville—started in with the vision ahead to make it what it is today, a vast field of clean enjoyment for many people. He was the first to institute what he called "the family entertainment," its forerunner consisting of concert halls patronized only by men and to be found in places as Butte, Montana and Fargo, North Dakota, were in the seventies.

There is a wide contrast between his first small venture in Boston and the latest addition to his circuit, the huge E. F. Albee theater in Brooklyn, with its auditorium seating over three thousand people and its wealth of art treasures displayed in spacious lobbies for the enjoyment of all who enter its doors. But after you have met Mr. Albee and begun to realize the down-East Yankee stock he comes from,

[*Continued on page 174*]

E. F. Albee was born in Machias, Maine, sixty-odd years ago. He has been in the show business in one capacity or another ever since he joined a circus at sixteen. Vaudeville, as we now know it, had its beginning in Mr. Albee's partnership with the late B. F. Keith, who was then proprietor of a dime museum in Boston. Their first effort to provide "family entertainment" was a production of the *Mikado* for ten cents. The little opera company in the picture played as many as six performances a day, and the whole venture was financed for five hundred dollars. Once successfully launched, Mr. Albee made it his business policy to spend money lavishly for the purpose of educating the public to expect better things in the improved environment of the modernized variety theater.



Favorites like Tony Williams and the Original Corinne (insets) have played the Keith Circuit for forty years.

COMES TO
LOVING YOU
SWEET
VALENTINE
YOU'RE
A DEAD
SPORT

Valentines come second only to Christmas messages in the fifty million dollars' worth of greeting cards annually exchanged in the United States. Warren A. Whitney, of Worcester, Massachusetts, is head of the largest valentine factory in the world. His presses run the year 'round to fill the demand.

The Vogue *of the* Valentine

An industry that keeps factories busy the year 'round is devoted to the production of the tender missives exchanged on a festal day that has been sacred to lovers for hundreds of years

by Susie Sexton

TO A woman goes the credit for the first valentine made in America. Hers is a little known story of business success back in the days when no one questioned that woman's place is in the home. She was Miss Esther Howland, daughter of a stationer in Worcester, Mass. Shortly before 1849 she found an imported English valentine in her father's shop and copied it. Her first samples brought in orders for thousands of dollars and compelled her to enlist the services of her family and friends. For over half a century thereafter she controlled the valentine industry in this country.

A RAW mid-winter breeze from the lakes was whirling riotously about the lamp-posts of the Chicago Loop. George Clarkson Whitney's long ulster flapped and waved about the top of his galoshes. His heavy muffler soared in the general direction of Milwaukee. But his heart was stout in spite of the bitter air and the fast-descending snowflakes.

Mr. Whitney, it seems, was the leading valentine manufacturer of Worcester, Massachusetts, or the U. S. A. for that matter. And this was indeed a great day for romance. For only that morning Mr. Whitney had brought the covered wagon of that good bishop, St. Valentine, to a full stop at Chicago's busiest corner. Cupid's fat form bulged in knobby outlines from a stout carpet bag filled with lace paper and red hearts which reposed on the curb at his feet.

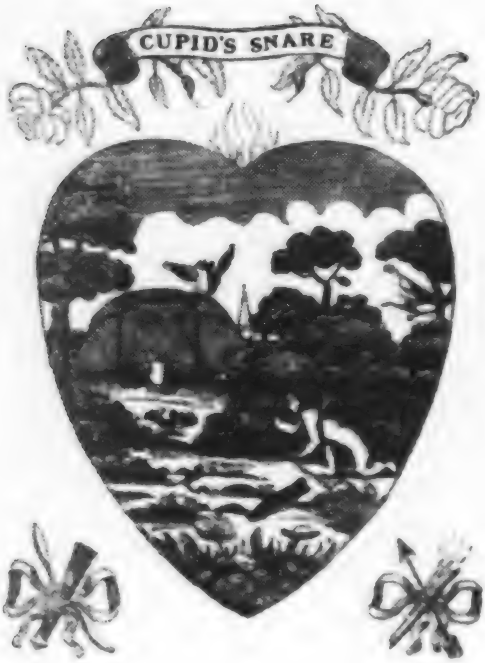
The time was a January day in the early '70's. It was quite a spell since Grant had marched on Richmond and enterprising Yankee probers had swarmed over the West and South. Yet the valentine was still practically unknown west of Vermont, although for nearly a quarter of a century it had been a best seller in Europe and even in stern New England.

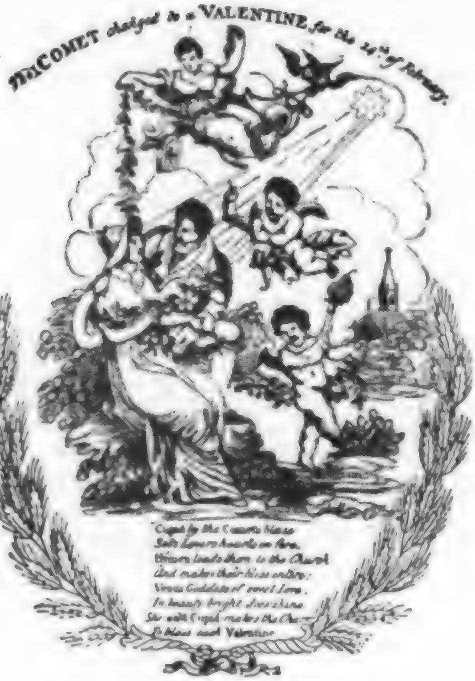
Bishop Valentine himself, patron saint of all lovers, was a Christian martyr of the third century. Angered by his zeal as a missionary, and by some marvelous cures which he effected, the Roman Emperor Claudius Gothicus had him tortured and finally beheaded. His connection with romance is still something of a mystery. Cynics say that he was in no way responsible for the vast volumes of sonnets which have borne his name through the ages. It merely happened that February 14th, his feast day, corresponded with the ancient Roman feast of the Lupercalia, or Spring festival, once sacred to Pagan lovers, at which time it was customary for young men to choose their sweethearts. This custom lasted through the Middle Ages at all the courts of chivalry, the young knights bestowing presents on their liege ladies and being supposed to remain loyal for the ensuing year to the service of their "Valentines."

Be that as it may, St. Valentine was undoubtedly a best seller on the continent and in the Eastern United States in A. D. 1870. Why not in the pioneer but chivalrous West? Thus argued Mr. Whitney. And so, despite the inclement weather, he had undertaken to act as the bishop's advance agent in the interest of all lovers in the Windy City.

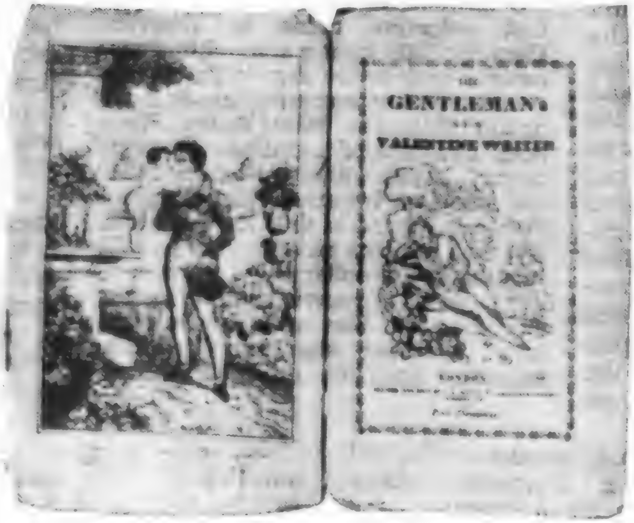
Before he had sold half a dozen bleeding hearts, however, his activities were rudely interrupted. An unsentimental guardian of the law discovered he had come from another state and was peddling without a license. The fine was one hundred dollars and costs, an investment well spent, for Chicago has been a flourishing valentine market ever since.

Last year more than fifty million dollars


CUPID'S SNARE


The COMET changed to a VALENTINE for the 14th of February.
Cupid by the Comet's blaze
Sets Lovers hearts on fire,
Hymen leads them to the Church
And makes their bliss entire;
Venus Goddess of sweet Love,
In beauty bright does shine
She with Cupid makes the Charm
To bless each Valentine

were spent for greeting cards in the United States. Valentines followed Christmas messages as the second largest item on the list. Worcester still remains the American shrine of the good saint. There the largest valentine factory in the world still bears the name of George C. Whitney, who died in 1915.


THE
GENTLEMAN'S
NEW
VALENTINE WRITER
LONDON

A century ago the smart thing to do was to write your own valentines, and a ready reference book of appropriate phrases could be had for thrupence. Quaint as they seem to us now, these old English valentines were the last word in their day, and their daintily formal sentiments set a flutter many a heart long since called to its reward.

Valentine-making is essentially a woman's work. It requires delicacy and deftness and the speed of youth. Although men are employed to run the larger presses, some women do this work also. And it is to a woman also that the credit for the first valentine made in America must also be given.

She was Miss Esther Howland, daughter of a stationer of Worcester and a graduate of Mt. Holyoke Academy. Somewhere about 1849 she found in her father's store a valentine imported from England. She decided to copy it. With the aid of a brother her first samples brought in orders for thousands of dollars. The demand was so startling that she was obliged to enroll dozens of girl friends in the work. On the site of her old home and work-shop the modern brick commissary of a rapid service lunch-room now stands. That is the original shrine of St. Valentine in this country.

For over half a century Miss Howland was alone in control of the American valentine industry. Annually she sent out goods valued at $100,000. Eventually, after her death, the business came to be dominated by George C. Whitney, who had been designing valentines since 1860. From manufacturing in a small room he was obliged to move to larger quarters on five different occasions. At first he imported goods from abroad.

During the last week in January, in the years after the Civil War, when valentine profits were not as substantial as they are now Mr. Whitney frequently took a business associate in his sleigh and toured New England villages. Plenty of foot-warmers and blankets were essential to such a trip. Usually the valentines were left on consignment in country stores. Then he began to install up-to-date machinery. To-day everything from lace paper to boxes is turned out at the factory.

The Whitney firm now occupies six large glass-walled factories. It covers more than 150,000 square feet of floor space. Six hundred and forty employees punch the time-clock there every day in the year and sometimes on Sunday. Sixty per cent. of them are girls. Eighteen monster presses and one hundred smaller ones hum from dawn till dark in the process of printing valentines in the basic colors—yellow, red, black and blue, with final touches of gold.

Upstairs in a quiet room seven artists are kept busy twelve months of the year originating new disguises for the eternal question, "Will you be mine?" An equal number of designs come in from outside the factory. Three hundred new and different styles of sentimental messages are placed on the market each year. And billions of copies of each are rolled off the presses every week.

Sitting in his father's office, Warren A. Whitney, now president of the firm, talked of the increasing volume and changing styles of lovemaking by post.

"Both men and women are sending more valentines now than they ever did before," he explained. "Men spend more money and buy in larger quantities. Children receive and purchase more valentines than their elders. But the observance of February 14th is spreading even among the grown-ups. Modern valentines have more punch and less delicacy than those of the last century. The arrow-pierced heart, the dove, the olive branch and the forget-me-not are giving way to such up-to-date pictures as the flivver and the telephone book. In these collegiate times, in fact, even an onion may be utilized as a love messenger by the youth who is too busy tripping the Charleston to learn anything about the sonnet. As a satirist, however, St. Valentine is losing his sharp tongue and is becoming charitable. The rough-and-tumble comic of other days, which aimed to wound and ridicule, has almost disappeared."

"What is the most popular of all valentines?" I asked him. "Is there any one which has endured for hundreds of years?"

"The lace valentine answers that question," was his reply. "Its vogue was on the wane for a time recently. But it is even more popular now than it was in the Victorian days and long before. Why? Because it embodies all the ideal qualities of ideal love-making—sentiment, delicacy and charm. It is also inexpensive. Fifty years ago the lace valentine was larger than it is today. About nine inches by five was the conventional size, I believe. And it was four or five "stories" high. Today it is usually two or three. Even years ago it sold only rarely for more than a dollar. Today the prices range from a quarter to a dollar. And the best seller in a box costs only thirty-five cents.

"One reason for its popularity," Mr. Whitney continued, "is that children have always loved it. But most modern youngsters would rather make their own than buy them at a stationery store. It adds greatly to their interest in the day. And so all the materials for the purpose now come in a box, with lace paper, red hearts, springs, envelopes and brightly colored picture cut-outs.

"The sentiment which appears inside the lace valentine must be as delicate as its outlines. Material rules are not so important. Something like this is suitable—

"I breathed a message into the air,
It fell to earth, I know not where;
If you 'listened in' then you'd know,
That you are my valentine, I love you so.

"Or a rhyme like this one—

"This lacey valentine is sent
With friendly wish and good intent
And greetings warm and kind;
And if some loving thought should hide
Beneath the lace or way inside,
I hope you will not mind.

"A typical children's verse is usually as simple as the old roses-are-red-candy-is-sweet-and-so-are-you theme, which never seems to die.

"Take this inside a red heart, for instance—

"Here's a little secret,
Promise not to tell,
If you like me as I like you
You like me pretty well.

"There are four essentials of any good valentine," Mr. Whitney declared, "particularly of the children's variety. These are plenty of color, irregular outline, bright pictures and a suitable sentiment.

Flappers Demand Wise Cracks

"The large animal cut-out about four inches tall or more, which stands by itself, is a popular novelty with little folks, too. This year the animals come mostly in twos as they did in the Ark. A pair of elephants carry on their backs the placard, 'We'll have a circus if you'll be my valentine.' Twin puppies with a roguish air announce that they are 'doggedly waiting to be your valentine' while sister kittens say 'I must get my lick in first. Be my valentine.' A single lion roars, 'I'm wild about you,' while a mule in pressing his suit advises against being stubborn. Most animal valentines have movable eyes, a feature which adds greatly to the childish appeal.

"Most of the new comics are demanded by the high-school generation," was another of Mr. Whitney's assertions. "The flapper in the half-yard skirt, who rolls her own socks and cigarets, is not wholly devoid of sentiment. But she can't waste much time on it. Usually she has too many engagements. And so the love-making of the collegiate youth on Valentine's Day must be pointed and pert.

"The jazz age has brought in a new school of valentines as well as other innovations. In this school belongs the onion valentine which shrieks 'I'm strong for you.' And the red sock with black patches which proclaims, 'Darn it, I want you to be my valentine.' Another cut-out which looks like a chain-store ad advises, 'If you're a wise-cracker you'll ask me to be your valentine.'

"Somewhat more elaborate is a small telephone book folder, February 14th issue. Inside is the query, 'I have your number. Will it do me any good?'

Comics Change With the Years

"The comics of 1875 were quite different from those the humorously inclined buy today, although the same varieties may still be found on news-stands in the rural districts. They were almost poster size, and were classified according to professions or characteristics for doctors, lawyers, tight-wads, and dozens of others.

"A typical example showed a henpecked husband. His wife grabbed him by the collar and waved a rolling-pin. The verse ran—

"We fear some day your better half
Will grab you by the neck
And christen you your proper name
Which we all know—henpeck."

Today this type of comic adds verses for the flapper and the radio fiend when displayed in country railroad stations and the grocery store. For the former there is this verse—

You bob your hair and wear short skirts
And think you look quite dapper.
You haven't sense enough to know
You're just a foolish flapper.

The elder Whitney never sanctioned the valentine which carried unkind thrusts. All his life he fought against it until today it is almost a thing of the past.

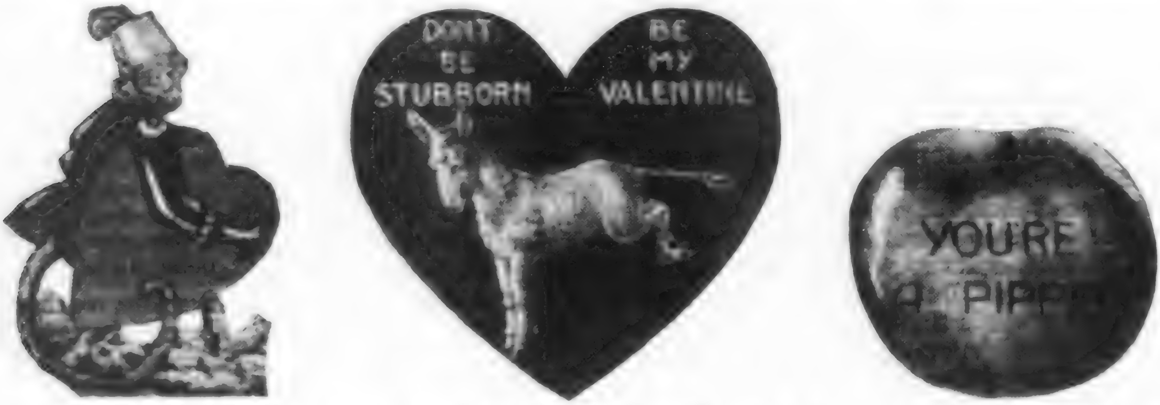
"Does the popularity of different types of valentines differ according to localities?" I asked.

"Decidedly," he replied. "Take New York. One of the largest department stores on the East Side in upper Manhattan has almost exclusively a children's trade in valentines. It sells practically nothing except the lace variety and the animal cut-outs. But it has always on display a few for older folks.

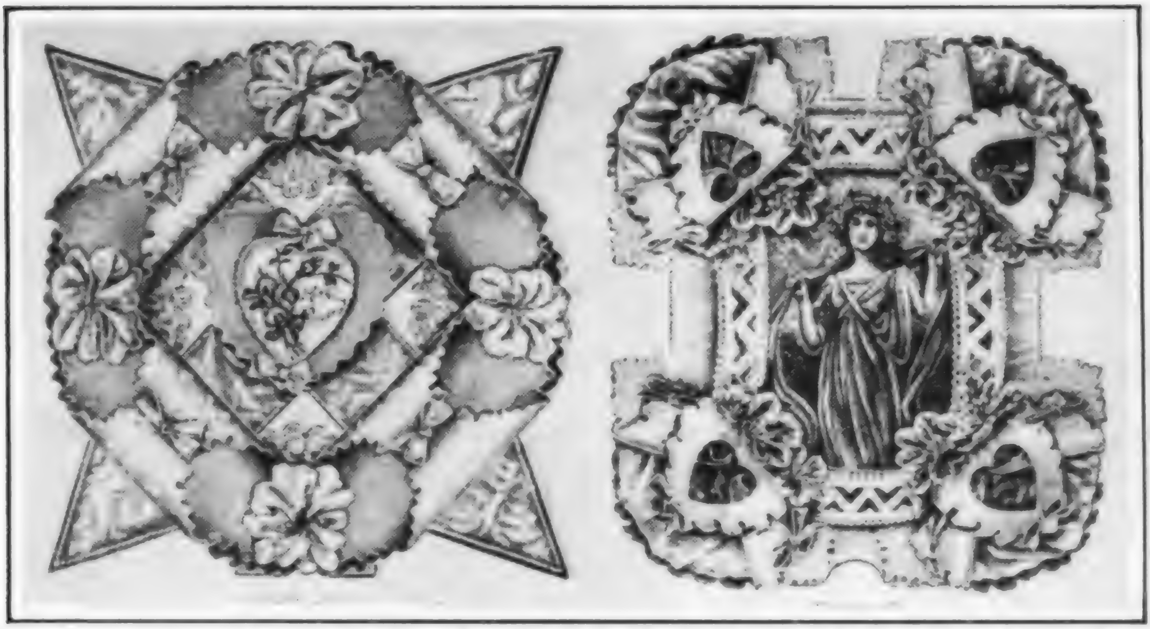
"On the lower East Side I am inclined to think the humorous valentine has a greater sale. Men buy most of these. In fact, women do not like to mix fun and sentiment. Most of them are apt to misunderstand the combination and become offended. On Broadway there is no demand whatever for valentines. Very few are displayed on the Great White Way you will notice. That public is too sophisticated.

"Theatrical people rarely buy them unless they have children. However, I recall having seen George Arliss spending some time at a valentine counter one day selecting a number of the graceful, sentimental variety.

"Fifth Avenue has a flourishing sale of valentines every year. The penny postal is popular above Greenwich Village. While above the Plaza a card suitable for the day may accompany pearls and diamonds of great value. Books are popular valentines along upper Fifth Avenue and in the residential districts.



Pointed and pert is the valentine favored by a generation that affects to scorn sentiment. Among other symptoms of the Jazz Age, count the valentines that the 1926 model flapper exchanges with her sheik. Cupid's darts give way to the less delicate symbolism of onions and hot dogs, bricks and donkeys. Their messages would bring a blush to the cheek of a love-lorn maiden of grandmother's day, could she understand them, for their language is not that of the lady who went into ecstasies over a beribboned creation of candy-box lingerie and treasured the daguerrotype of a swain in side whiskers.



Strong men poured as much as fifty dollars worth of gold dust into the scales in exchange for one of these vividly colored floral masterpieces. A search in the attic trunk may reward you with one of these priceless valentine creations of celluloid, satin and plush, popular in lumber camps and mining communities back in the 90's. The one on the left is described in an old catalog as "mottled celluloid rolled across corners of puffed silk with corded edges. Hand painted satin heart in center, with cut-out celluloid heart surrounding. Tied with ribbon bows and embossed silk rosettes."

Flowers and candy in satin boxes or gayly colored baskets are also in favor.

"The very expensive valentine gift has been a custom ever since Samuel Pepys complained about the hole St. Valentine made in the family budget. Wasn't it in 1667 that he wrote—

" 'This morning came to my wife's bedside, I being up dressing myself, little Will Mercer to be her valentine, and brought her name writ upon blue paper in gold letters, done by himself very pretty; and we were both well pleased with it. But I am also this year my wife's valentine and it will cost me five pounds, but that I must have laid out had we not been valentines.' "

Elsewhere Mr. Pepys wrote of the high cost of silk stockings and jewels purchased by young and gay blades of the period to commemorate the saint.

Mr. Whitney continued:

"Wives and sweethearts receive the sentimental valentines in the greatest numbers. 'To my Wife' cards, however, outsell those addressed 'To my Husband.' 'To my Sweetheart' sentiments outdo them both.

"Even in other times than leap year those who believe women should propose are great valentine senders. The more self-reliant are bold enough to admit—

About you I'm stark, staring, ravingly mad
For you look like a collar store's breath-taking ad!

"This is somewhat bolder than the literary style of the Victorian ladies who resorted to fainting odors at the psychological moment and penned the following lines—

Long in secret have I sighed,
For you all others have denied,
And if your heart I cannot gain,
I ne'er will wed another swain.

"Such a maiden would like to be introduced to the young man of Civil War days who advertised:

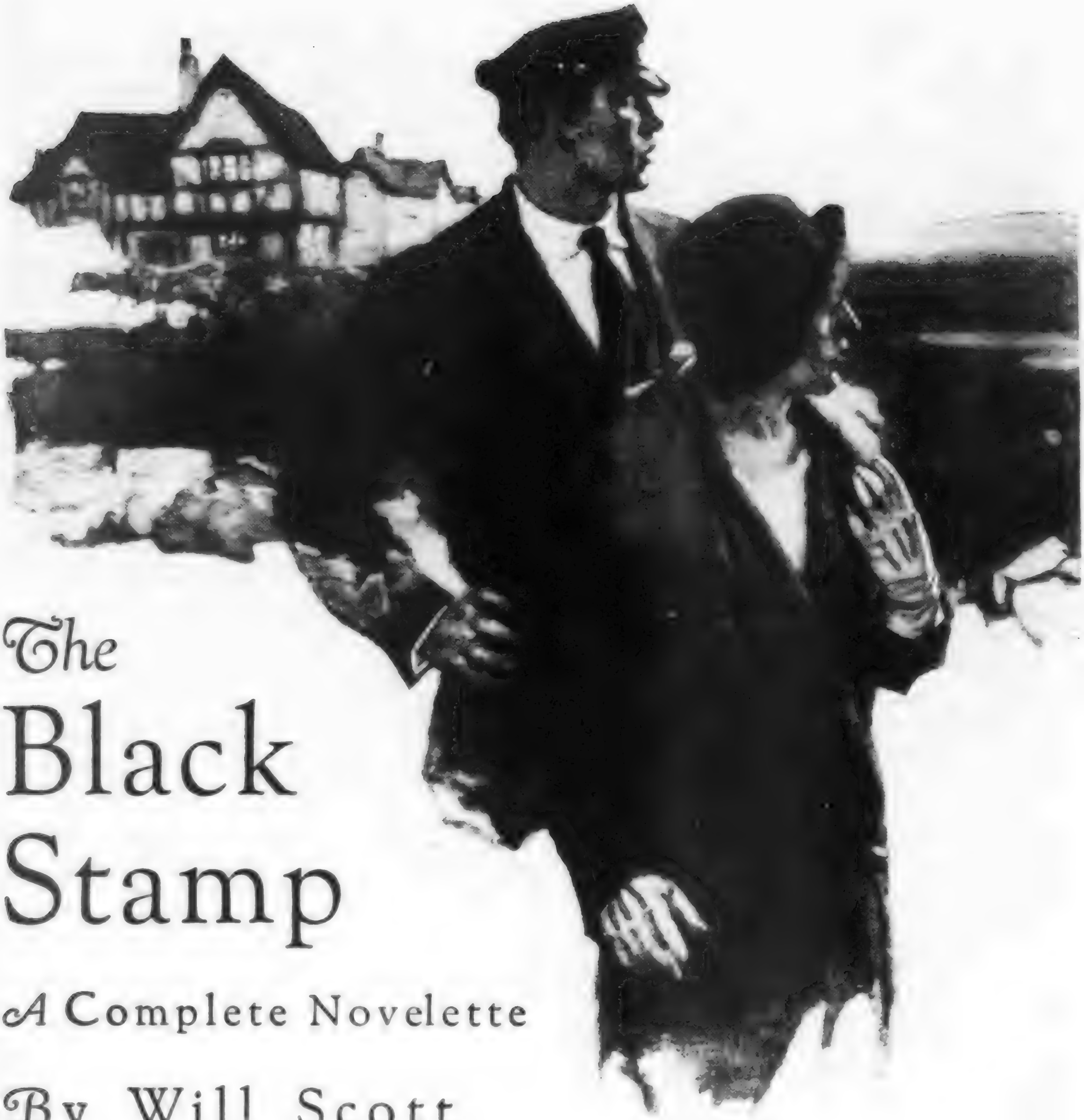
Wanted a sweetheart! A genteel young man
In the first circles moving—would meet if he can
With a girl that is pretty and playful and fond
And whose mood with his own mood would just
correspond.
His method of wooing he hopes none will slight,
As his whole time is otherwise taken up quite
And he's known paper matches to burn very
bright.

Lovers Once Wrote Their Own

In the early part of the last century publishers were more considerate of the lovelorn in at least one respect than they are now. They issued polite, ready-reference volumes called "valentine writers," for both sexes, so the entire questions of proposals and acceptances was comparatively simple from any standpoint.

"Cupid's Delight," a tiny volume of that period, hides a valentine which ought to delight any of F. Scott Fitzgerald's heroines, even

[*Continued on page 167*]



The Black Stamp

A Complete Novelette

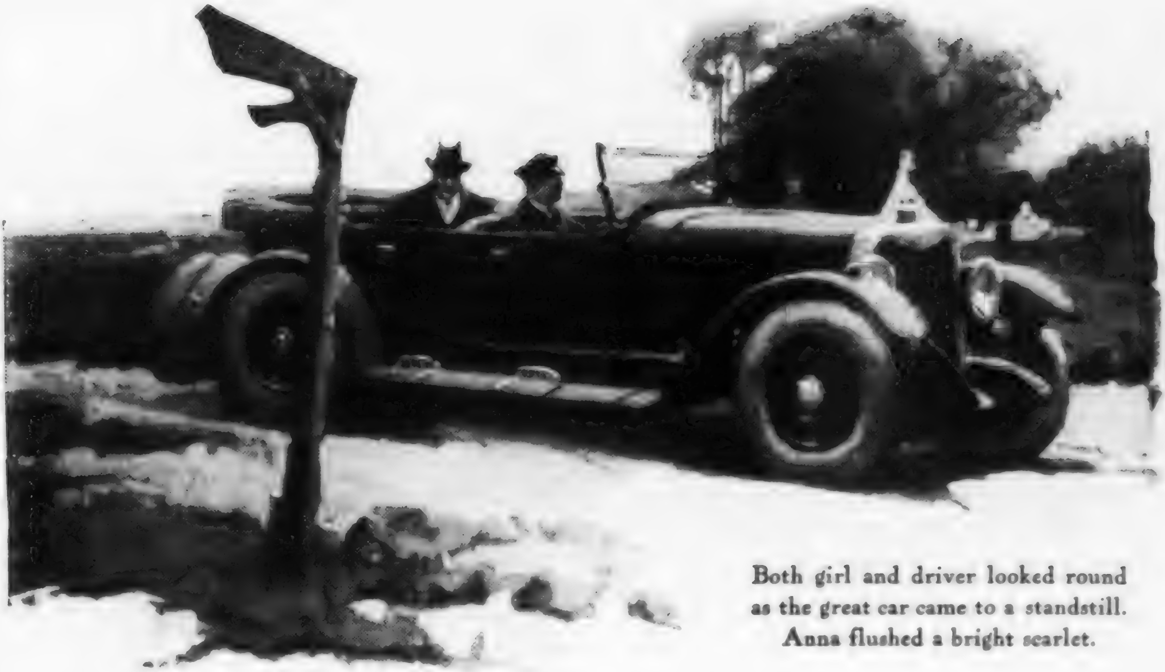
By Will Scott

THE summer of 1925 was in many ways peculiar. There was a subtle sense of something sinister imminent. Men opened their morning newspapers with a feeling of apprehension, yet no man knew what it was he feared.

This sense of dread was not confined to the metropolis, where such things normally breed. It was spread to the farthest English field. And it was marked by a quaint mental state that seemed to touch all the nation at once. As the people trembled before the future they turned for relief with some desperation to the past. There was a simultaneous revival of good things and bad things, such as a great religious revival side by side with a revival of cock-fighting in public.

There was an extraordinary revival of hero-worship, dead these ten years; extraordinary because of its object. This was no idol of the stage or movie screen, neither was it a front-rank politician nor a soldier, but a solver of mysteries—the man who found the barber who was not missing and could say why the spur was stolen from the statue of King Charles—that much over-stressed thing, a detective. But decidedly a detective with a difference. Your ordinary detective, whatever his merits, is a sad fellow, and Disher was not sad. Sometimes he was accused of playing to the gallery, and once he confessed to playing to the stalls; but the world would have been a duller world without him, and even those who had no cause to like him admitted themselves grateful for his existence.

But perhaps the most remarkable revival of all in this very remarkable season was the revival of wife-beating, which broke out, rather



Both girl and driver looked round as the great car came to a standstill. Anna flushed a bright scarlet.

Introducing a different kind of detective—the great Mr. Disher, uncommon solver of uncommon mysteries

Illustrated by R. J. Cavaliere

furtively, in one or two corners of the country. A peculiar art; and it knew no better background for its practice than that unpleasant slum in Kentish Town—a chapelry of St. Paucras' parish, a north suburb of London, which is known as Lant's Buildings, and no better exponent than Mr. Albert Talbot, who lived there at No. 7, the flat with no lid to its dustbin! Mr. Albert Talbot, who opens our story for us and then departs so mysteriously, without so much as a curt good-by.

With the bright days of early summer came a novel notion to Albert Talbot. It was nothing less than this: the joyous idea of taking a holiday apart from his wife. Accordingly—for to think was with him to act—he extracted whatever there was in the children's money box, took the rent from under the clock, borrowed a pound or two from a neighbor (under threat of smashing in the neighbor's face) and betook himself from Lant's Buildings for a care-free week beside the rolling sea. He went to Southend, which was not where Mrs. Talbot told him to go.

He celebrated the return by emptying the dustbin across the living-room floor and going down into the gloomy court that fifty Lant's Buildingers shared between them, collecting pebbles from broken concrete and breaking every window in the place but one. And this he left intact only because he was taken away by two stalwart Kentish Town policemen before he could complete the good work. Next day he was put away for two weeks and described in the Press as "the world's worst husband."

And on the morning after Mr. Talbot had been put away the first of the remarkable happenings took place in Lant's Buildings. The postman called at No. 7.

Now, the postman had never called at No. 7 before. However, here most certainly was a letter, addressed in choice typewriting to "Albert Talbot, Esq.," and Mrs. Talbot, who took it in, was not a little curious to know what the nature of its contents might be. She turned it over with considerable awe and it was then that she noticed on this wonderful thing the postman had brought, an added wonder: Across the point of the flap at the back a second stamp was stuck, frustrating any hope she might have of opening the thing. It was a black stamp, cut out of plain black paper, with no design printed upon it. Mrs. Albert wrinkled her brow, but decided that it would be too dangerous to go deeper into the matter. So she put the letter behind the clock to gather dust until the "world's worst husband" should regain his freedom.

Presently Albert was released and came home, and Mrs. Albert took the mysterious thing down from behind the clock.

"Letter for yer," she said surlily. "Came arfter yer was gorn."

"Eh? Wot's this?" Albert grabbed the letter and frowned at the black stamp on the back. "Farncy bits!" was his comment. He slit the flap and took out a folded sheet of notepaper.

His face purpled and he began to chew his lips. Being unable to find words appropriate to the occasion he swept the contents of the table to the floor and pointed at the epistle and gesticulated violently. He then tore the letter into halves and threw it upon the floor and shook his fist savagely in her face.

"My Gawd!" he cried. "To think you 'ave the damn sauce to try a trick like this on me—"

"Wot you mean, Albert?" his wife asked.

"That," Albert shouted, "is wot *you* got to tell *me!* Wot *you* mean—"

"Me?" said his wife. "I ain't got nothin' to do with it."

"No?" sneered Albert. "Really not? Ho!"

And with this he broke loose. It was the worst outbreak that even he had achieved.

At a little before midnight, having drunk himself drowsy, Albert retired. Mrs. Talbot remained awake, thinking dismally of the future and watching the minutes tick away on the half-crown clock. And suddenly at two o'clock she was startled by a cry in her husband's bedroom and the sound of him nervously banging on the panel of her door.

"Nancy!" he was calling. "Nancy! Fer Gawd's sake let me in! The blarsted thing—"

She sprang out of bed, and, too terrified to search for matches, stumbled through Albert's bedroom to the living-room, her whole body shaking, fearful of what she might fall over in the dark. The awful scream had awakened others in Lant's Buildings and she could hear big Pat Brady, the butcher's salesman from the next flat, hammering on the door outside. She tottered across and fumbled first for the key and then for the bolts. A light dazzled her eyes and Pat Brady came through. A moment afterwards she saw little Briggs, the sign-writer from upstairs, framed in the doorway, dressed only in his nightshirt, looking a perfect fool of a little man.

"Wot's up 'ere?" Pat Brady asked.

"I don't know—I don't know. . . . It was Albert screamin'," gasped Mrs. Talbot.

"Where is 'e?"

"I don't know—"

"I'll wait 'ere," said little Briggs, the sign-writer, remaining in the doorway. "Just in case—" And as he had not the courage to add "in case anything happens to me" he left it at that. Mrs. Duckers from downstairs shouldered him aside. Little Briggs, being unrenowned for physical courage, was not popular in Lant's Buildings.

Pat Brady got the gas lighted and looked round the living-room, but Albert wasn't there. This seemed to suggest the scullery, but he wasn't there either. Puzzled, they passed through into the bedrooms, and after failure there, there was nowhere else to look. Indeed, utterly unbelievable though it was to everybody, Albert Talbot wasn't anywhere!

DISHER. The vast and spacious Disher. The tired one, who never walked when he could ride, nor rode when others could be paid to ride instead. The sky-sweeping, sun-blotting, chair-filling Disher, all fat and brown, with a tiny curly smile to help the rest along. The great Mr. Disher in more ways than one.

Disher the unmodest. "Show me the *use* of a mountain's pretending it's a molehill," he would drawl, "and I might begin to play at that game. Not until. Diamonds were made to sparkle, weren't they? Well, then. Close your eyes if you can't stand the glare."

That was Disher.

Miles Kale was the first in Seasalter to see him. Newly arrived, framed in the doorway of the Hotel Desolation, it was sunset of that summer's night when the strange drama began. Miles Kale, this was, who kept the place; though nobody knew why.

Disher stopped the revolution of his monocle and tucked it under his giant frown, stooping as he did so to lift a suitcase from the step.

"A lodging for the night," he said wearily.

Miles took up the suitcase, but still hesitated. Disher, with a sigh, took a seat on an infirm chair.

"When you have decided," he added, "which room I may be permitted to occupy, perhaps you will be good enough to inform my friend Mr. Henry Moon that I have arrived. The name is Disher. You are pretty sure to have heard it before."

"Ah!" Miles stirred to a semblance of activity. "You are Mr. Moon's friend? I did not understand that, sir. Yes, of course. Mr. Moon is out, sir," he added. "I believe he has gone into Whitstable for the evening."

"Then bring me a good stiff whisky," said Disher, "and I will endeavor to bear my sorrow in silence."

He creaked through the open door on to the veranda, which ran the length of the inn and was high above the sloping cliff, with the cellars beneath. Uninviting as the whole place was, something more than rotted sticks was needed to account for the hostility which Disher felt now in the air. Broken wooden steps led down to the beach, and near them were three men round a broken table; two on rickety chairs and a third perched precariously on the uncertain railing. At sight of Disher they all looked up. Suddenly they had stopped talking and he felt their resentment of his presence. It was a little thing, the merest hint of a thought that came between them, but it drove him to a decision. For a brief instant his eyes met the eyes of the man who sprawled on the rail. He had been about to withdraw, but now he came forward, nodding pleasantly, as one holiday-maker to another, offering a conventional greeting. And at this the man on the rail leaned forward to respond.

"A delightful evening," he ventured.

He was a tall and attractive-looking man, with a pink face and a carefully-waxed mustache and with twinkling eyes looking out from under bushy gray brows.

"For lovers, innkeepers and murderers—yes," Disher said casually. "A very delightful evening indeed."

A distinct wave of sensation agitated the little group. The tall man stirred uneasily. A brilliantly red little man in a gray hat opened his mouth, said nothing and sat back; while a third, who had rather the appearance of a gentleman-gamekeeper, stared with quite undisguised rudeness.

Disher took a seat and produced a cigar-case which he passed across the table.

"But perhaps you don't think of murder?" he asked politely. "Some people don't. I meet with the most astounding indifference to the subject. People are—careless."

What more he might have had to say on this unconventional topic was interrupted by Miles Kale coming out on the veranda with a glass on a tray. As he set this down he said:

"Your friend is coming up the road now, Mr. Disher. Shall I tell him you are waiting here?"

"If you have the time to spare," said Disher.

Miles withdrew. But the effect of his simple words was not so quickly dispelled. The others exchanged a glance, and the big man on the rails looked keenly from beneath his bushy brows as he asked a question.

"*The* Mr. Disher?"

"Quietly, please," Disher implored. "This village would be considerably annoyed if it knew it had been caught unawares, without the banners out."

HERE, perhaps fortunately, the conversation was interrupted by the arrival through the hotel of Disher's friend, Henry Moon, and a girl of twenty-two or so, with flame-colored hair and a swinging step and a frank and friendly manner. The blue-black night had driven the sun down behind the Isle of Sheppey and all color had gone from the water, but it was almost as if a speck of the day had been captured and kept behind by this smiling girl. She went at once to the tall man's side, taking his arm with a display of affection at once obvious and subtle, open yet unostentatious.

"I could not get your book, Daddy," she said. "The clocks were just striking when I reached High Street and the shop was closed. You're not going to be cross about it, are you? I met Mr. Moon and we went to the pictures. This is Henry Moon, Daddy."

There was a general introduction. The tall man's name was T. C. Copeland and his daughter's name was Anna. The red-faced man in gray was Dr. Percy. The other was Mr. Mason Snow. They all lived on Sheppey Island. Mr. T. C. Copeland waved his hand vaguely and offered an invitation yet more vague. Some day, he implied, they would take tea together.

The gathering broke up shortly afterwards, T. C. Copeland's party descending the steps to a motorboat that lay on the fringe of the lifting tide. A moment later the little vessel swung round and headed for the island, which lay like a pale, uncertain shadow across the water.

"Fascinating people," said Henry Moon, who was leaning over the veranda rail watching the departure, "and a fascinating place to live in."

"Strange people," Disher amended, "and a strange place to live in."

"Why, what do you mean?"

"I don't know," Disher confessed. "Just an idea."

"Peculiar idea, I must say," said Henry Moon. "What's wrong with Copeland, anyway? I've never met him before, but I've heard a good deal about him. He's all right. Everybody seems to like him."

"Is that so?" drawled Disher. "Why, then, does not Mr. Copeland like everybody? Me, for instance."

"How do you know he doesn't like you?"

"Can't say. I know, though. I shouldn't say the girl is exactly smitten, either."

A shadow crossed Henry Moon's face. He had met the girl, quite casually, a week before.

"Anna," he said, "is a girl in a million. She's—different."

"All girls are," said Disher. "Been over to the island?"

"Good Lord, no," said Henry Moon.

"Why not?"

"I haven't been invited."

"You haven't? How's that?"

"Hang it, man!" Henry protested. "Give the girl time. I tell you it's only a week since I came here."

Disher absently spun a spoon round on an empty plate.

"This T. C. Copeland," he said at length. "What is he?"

"I've heard he's an artist," said Henry. "He entertains a great number of artists at his place during the season—Sheppey Court, they call it. I believe it's quite a fine establishment."

"Really?" And after a moment's silence Disher changed the subject. "Strange affair at Kentish Town," he said.

"It's more than that," Henry nodded. "It's a knocker. The papers simply can't leave it alone. A man to *vanish* like that . . . Are you going to do anything about it?"

Disher nodded.

"Certainly. In the first place I shall sit on the veranda here and think about it for a day or two."

"A holiday first, you mean?"

"Well . . ." Disher leaned across the table and lowered his voice. "Seeing that I am here, I had thought of remaining for a day or two and taking the air. It's not my idea of a holiday resort, but then probably Heaven won't be my idea of Heaven. We must take what we get. However, something is transpiring to make me think that probably I am not to be allowed to have my much-needed holiday, after all."

"What's that?"

"We are being watched."

"Eh?" Henry Moon raised his eyebrows and mismanaged his fork badly.

"Shadowed," said Disher, and would say no more that night.

DISHER sat in the early morning sunshine on the veranda, lazily turning pages of the *Monitor*. A lively fly was his only companion, Henry Moon having gone off early, he knew not where. Sheppey was palely pleasant by early day, boasting a white blot or two where lonely inn or bungalow stood, but otherwise barren.

Reluctantly Disher gave his mind to sensation.

And sensation there was, in full measure.

Mr. Mark Amber of Thanet Towers, on the North Foreland. Gone. . . .

The *Monitor* told it in the type it kept for wars and coronations.

THE BLACK STAMP AGAIN!

Invisible Menace Spreads

WELL-KNOWN BROADSTAIRS JEWELER VANISHES IN BROAD DAYLIGHT

There followed a minute account of the last few hours of Mark Amber's activities before his strange disappearance. The relation of his case to that of Albert Talbot, was, of course, treated extensively.

Amber had vanished from his garden almost before the eyes of his two servants, in mid-afternoon.

William Baines had been working in the garden and Thomas Evered, the butler, had been coming down the drive to deliver a telephone message. Suddenly Mr. Amber gave a cry. When they looked in his direction he had vanished.

Disher read no more. At that moment a startled cry came up from the beach below, a voice he thought he knew, and casting the paper aside he sprang to the rail and looked down. There was nothing to be seen, but the cry could have come from behind a row of bathing huts, not far from the foot of the veranda steps. At an astonishing speed for so bulky a man he ran down the steps and across the pebbles and turned the corner of the nearest hut. And there he found Anna Copeland in the embrace of an offensive-looking man in a startling striped suit, a man with an untidy mustache and a flushed face and a straw hat of exaggerated shape and violent band; the typical seaside bounder.

It was not often that Disher was moved to physical exertion, but his descent upon the bounder was so swift as to seem almost impossible. Before the man had time to become properly aware of the grip on his shoulder he was three yards out in the water.

"You better watch out, after this," he cried. "You'll wish it hadn't happened, my girl."

"What does he mean?" Disher asked, leading her up the beach.

"I'm sure I don't know," Miss Copeland replied. "I don't know the man. He is some drunken holiday-maker. I can't put into words my gratitude to you, Mr. Disher. It seems futile to say 'Thank you' in the conventional way."

"At such moments," said Disher, "I am thankful that words are inadequate. Thanks are as difficult to receive as to give. Let us say no more about it."

The Copeland motorboat was near by and Anna explained that she was on her way home after having been in to Whitstable for a book her father had wanted the night before. She had been about to step into the boat when the bounder had come up and put his arms round her and forced his drunken kisses upon her. Taking Disher's hand she stepped in now; and then, to her considerable surprise, he stepped in after her.

"I cannot permit you to go back alone after what has happened," he explained. "There is a heavy sea rising and you must be shaken up considerably after your adventure. I can drive a motorboat better than an expert."

For some minutes neither spoke. Disher hummed an airy little tune that had just come down from London. The girl sat perfectly still, staring across the point of the bows at the nearing island. A little flush was on her cheeks and he knew that his intrusion was unwelcome to her. At which he hummed a little louder; and then, at last, he spoke.

"Miss Copeland."

She turned, and it was plain that under a strong attempt to be gracefully pleasant she was hiding a rising temper. He noted the conflict and smiled to himself.

"I want you to help me establish the identity of a gentleman who is strangely betraying a desire to be strongly attached to me during my stay here. He dresses like a cast-off clothing store after a fire and he's got a face like a caricature of himself." And he went on to give a minute description of a man he had found under the dining-room window the night before. When he had finished he looked at her keenly, but she replied without hesitation, her eyes full on his.

"Why, yes. That is Doddy Peters. He is a local 'character.' Not too strong mentally, I am afraid. He lives anywhere—old barns or on the beach. Poor Doddy!"

They exchanged a glance, and then Anna asked what Doddy had been doing.

"Watching me," said Disher.

For some moments Anna was silent, and then it seemed that she realized it would be perhaps suspicious to ignore so melodramatic a statement. She turned and faced him.

"Really?" she said casually. "Why should Doddy Peters watch you?"

"Can't say," said Disher. "It's certainly a waste of his time. But then, lots of people watch me. A nuisance, but what can one do? It's what is called the penalty of fame."

"It must be fascinating to be famous," she said.

"For the crowd, yes," Disher nodded. "For the famous, awfully boring sometimes."

He helped her ashore. In the intricacies of the unusual conversation she had forgotten the book she had been to Whitstable to purchase, and he stooped within the boat and reached for it. As he held it toward her he glanced at the title and was startled to see that it was a copy of Capper's *Layman's Outline of Criminal Law*.

"Your father's book, Miss Copeland," he said quietly; and he observed a flush mount her cheeks as she took the volume.

The immediate landscape was almost terrifying in its bleakness. The little wooden jetty was the only man-made thing in sight. All else were great pebbles and rough grass and mudflats and a little sandy rise. A crude path led up this rise and when they reached the brow Disher saw the Copeland bungalow standing a quarter of a mile back, quite a spacious and imposing affair, with a belt of disspirited trees around it. Anna Copeland explained that her father was away across the island, but that on his return Mr. Disher must call and receive his thanks for rescuing her from the inebriated tripper. At which Disher stopped suddenly in the path.

"I accept my dismissal," he said calmly. But he did not look to see the effect of his words. Suddenly he stooped and plucked a bunch of daisies from the grass at his feet.

"Why—?" he heard her saying.

"The daisies? Because they are so unexpected," he replied. "An orchid in the buttonhole of a man of my eminence would excite no comment at all, whereas a bunch of daisies would be sure to be talked about. I like to be talked about," he added.

When Disher got back to Driftwood Inn he was surprised to find Henry Moon pacing restlessly up and down the veranda.

Henry Moon was thirty, with a thinnish face and prominent ears, a gentle manner, a trim and spotless appearance. He had been with Disher for five years, doing most of the big man's work and playing the difficult part of Silence in the drama of the other's Talk.

"Things are getting nearer," was Disher's comment. He took Henry Moon's arm and pointed to the road above, along the brow of the slope, where the bounder of that morning's adventure was walking, dry again after his swift immersion. "You see that man," he said. "Do you know him?"

"Never saw him before," said Henry Moon.

DISHER briefly related his rescue of Anna Copeland and his trip to Sheppey. "She vowed she had never seen him before, but I wonder. Is he an enemy of theirs, and if so, why? I want you to go up and follow him and find out where he lives and who he is. On your way back, telephone and engage a taxi to run us down to the station."

"Where are we going?" asked Henry Moon.

"To the North Foreland," Disher replied.

"This morning's new sensation—Mark Amber? Well, we certainly can't complain that life's dull."

Ten minutes later a taxi and Henry Moon were at the door together, the latter with the information that the bounder's name was Pottar, that he was staying at the Starlight Bungalow, that he had come for a holiday from London, and that he spent most of his time upon the water, fishing. Some offences here, perhaps, but nothing penal. "We can leave Mr. Pottar for a wet day," remarked Disher; and they put off via taxi and train toward the Foreland.

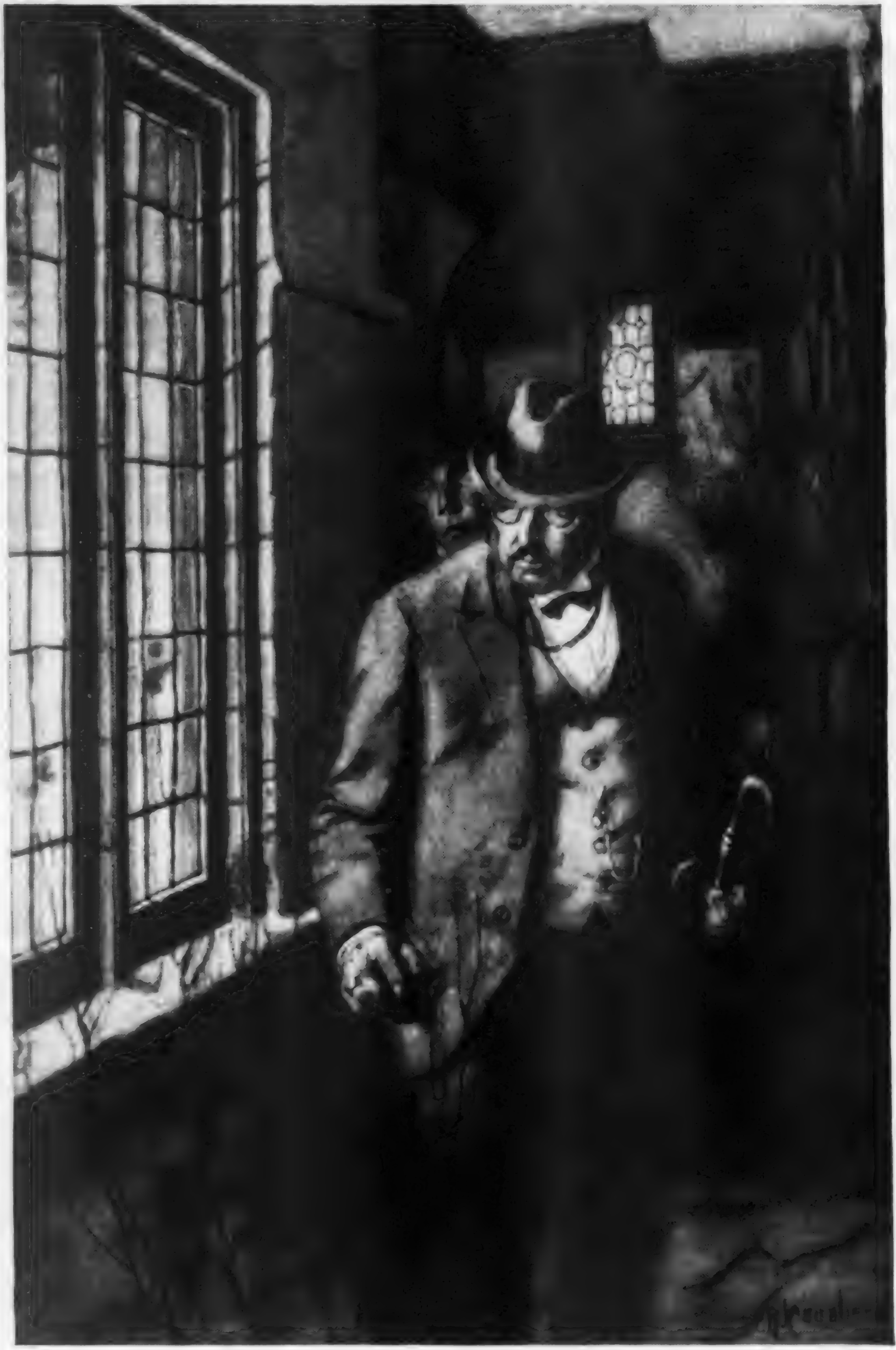
When they reached Thanet Towers, the home of the late Mark Amber, they found it to be an ugly house of red brick formed in unpleasing shapes, with stone eagles on the gable peaks.

Disher showed no interest in the scene of the disappearance. He walked up to the house and obtained of the officer in charge permission to interview the two servants concerned.

"I'll have them brought up to you in the library," said the Inspector.

The gardener was a small and meek-looking man of forty, with tired eyes and a weary air. Before speaking, Disher scrutinized him for a considerable period through his monocle in order to make the man thoroughly ill at ease.

But he was quite unsuccessful. William Baines was as well-poised as he was respectable. And that he was respectable to dullness was



They kept near the window, and indeed they risked much by looking through it. And soon they saw, with satisfaction, the inner door open and into the room staggered the mute artist.

indisputably established. He answered without hesitation Disher's seemingly inconsequential questions about his life, his habits. And Henry Moon's subsequent investigations proved him to be truthful in every instance. He was a stolid, worthy, chapel-going Britisher. Butcher, baker and candle-stick maker gave testimony to his good character and he himself gave ample evidence of insufficient imagination and brains for a conspirator.

"That will do," said Disher at length. "You may go, and ask the butler to step up here, will you?"

Evered, Mark Amber's butler, was a tall man with a hard face and keen eyes, yet not altogether unlikeable.

"How long have you been with Mr. Amber, Evered?" Disher asked.

"Nearly three years, sir."

"You were a butler before that?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where?"

"I was in the service of Mr. Renton Yates, of Fitzjohn's Avenue, Hempstead, sir," he said at length.

"Why did you leave?"

"Well, sir . . . It was a difference of opinion, sir—a difference of political opinion. Mr. George Yates, sir—Mr. Renton's son, and a very hot-tempered young man—took objection to certain views he heard me give expression to before the other servants one day. In his haste he struck me and we fought. A rather deplorable situation, sir; and it ended in my dismissal."

"And did Mr. Amber know of all this?"

"Of course, sir. I had to give references. Mr. Amber used to say, sir, that it is a man's future that matters, not his past."

"How long ago did you leave Mr. Renton Yates, Evered?" Disher asked.

"Three and a half years ago, sir," the butler replied.

"And you came to Mr. Amber three years ago. Where were you in the meantime?"

"I had not mentioned that, sir. As a matter of fact, I was merely a kind of general servant, finding it difficult to get a better class situation after my trouble at Hempstead. I had to take a situation in a smaller household than the kind to which I had been accustomed. The address is 103, Palace Walk, Kensington, sir."

That afternoon, as they were returning by train to Miles Kales' hostelry, the Black Stamp shrouded itself still closer in mystery, as the headline of the evening paper disclosed.

BLACK STAMP PARIS OUTRAGE

M. Lemère, Minister for Foreign Affairs, walking in Rue d'Afrique, disappeared in sight of several passers-by at two o'clock this afternoon. Statements show that he received a letter bearing a black stamp yesterday.

Disher sat back and stared at Henry Moon, over whose face the blankest of expressions was swiftly spreading. Then he snapped his fingers and fumbled in his waistcoat pocket for the train ticket.

"Somebody," he said, "must think I'm a born fool! Here, Henry Moon, take your ticket and get out at Whitstable and go back to the hotel and keep your eyes open. I am going on. Don't wait up if the last train does not bring me. Are you armed?"

"No."

"If ever you are murdered it will be suicide. Take this revolver and—keep my wits about you!"

"Where are you going to?" asked Henry Moon.

"Back to the beginning," said Disher.

THOUGH nearly three weeks had now gone by since the disappearance of Mr. Albert Talbot a continuous stream of the curious poured Kentish Town-wards daily and Disher found the approaches to the mean court still held by a weary squad of police. In the buildings themselves he discovered a luxurious disinclination to perform gray, everyday labors, an enthusiastic desire on the part of squalid inhabitants to bask for evermore in the sunshine of reflected flame.

The Mrs. Albert Talbot of these post-husband days was popular and celebrated, newspapered and photographed and freed from the worry of Albert. At first she vaguely understood that Disher's mission was in some way connected with the finding of that rare treasure of a man, and because of this she betrayed no undue disposition to be accommodating. "Alburt's gorn," she said. "Alburt was spirited away. A fine mug I'd be to try an' spirit 'im back, wot? I arsk yer!"

Having assured the woman that he was not interested in restoring her happily lost husband, Disher finally wheedled her into reciting the events of the fateful evening and exhibiting an authentic, but not flattering photograph of Albert Talbot.

A moment or two afterwards he took his departure, going from Lant's Buildings by a back way to avoid the crowds. He had no desire as yet to be placarded and photographed in connection with the Black Stamp mystery. He found a taxi and sped across the great city to the quiet backwaters of Kensington. 103, Palace Walk, was by no means so palatial as its name, and dissatisfaction with the fact of it had reached such a point with its occupants that they were at this very moment in process of removing to some more cheerful place. Disher found an old lady who looked like a picture of Queen Victoria, standing on a bare patch of lawn, superintending the removal. To his questions she tendered perky, optimistic replies.

"Evered?" she said. "Why, yes, he was here for six months or so. He was a sort of butler-gardener-coachman. Are you wanting a reference?"

"I should like to know something about him, if it would not be troubling you too much."

"No, indeed," said the old lady. "As for Evered, you need not hesitate. You'll never find a better."

"But I understand that he was in trouble before he came here?"

"Who wasn't in trouble before coming anywhere?" the old lady asked. "If he has told you that it is a point in his favor, I should think. Lots of men wouldn't tell you. He was honest and truthful and kind and the hardest of workers. He only left me when I could no longer afford to keep him."

"Thank you very much," said Disher. "What you have told me has influenced me considerably in his favor. Good-by, and thanks again."

As it was not yet five by the clocks in Kensington High Street, Disher took another taxi to Fenchurch Street, and on the stroke of six was walking along the promenade at Southend, chating with the venders, and absorbing what he hoped to be useful information.

On learning that there was no boat across to the Kent coast until near to noon of the next day, Disher returned to town and booked a room at the Grosvenor, spending the rest of the evening reading the report of the latest visitation.

M. Lemère, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, and the Black Stamp's latest victim, was credited with a brave skepticism in the face of the threat. "If they want me," he had said a few minutes before his disappearance, waving the black-stamp letter almost gaily, "I am here." And he put on his hat and walked abroad fearlessly, to vanish in broad daylight as he walked down the Rue d'Afrique.

Disher laid the paper aside and closed his eyes. "What," he asked himself, "is the connection between the French Foreign Minister, Albert Talbot of Kentish Town, and Mr. Mark Amber of Broadstairs? What is the connection between the enterprising Jules Storme, the Parisian journalist, and that dull and religious gardener, William Baines? If any, what is the connection?"

His finger fumbled at his lapel and he looked down and took from his button-hole a little drooping bunch of daisies.

From the letter-rack he took notepaper and envelope and sat down to write a lengthy letter. This, with the faded daisies, he tucked into the envelope. He wrote an address, rang a bell, spoke earnestly with the page who appeared, and then sent that surprised youth away, bearing the letter, the richer by a pound.

That shrill organ, the *Daily Monitor*, never lost its temper and its voice simultaneously. The deeper its indignation the louder its shout. This may have been in the mind of the directorate when it called for a new editor, selecting that justly-renowned lion of ink, "Ducky" Springfield. "Ducky" Springfield settled to his task like a kitten to cream. On his very first day he achieved a slogan, and next morning it was scattered, millions deep, across the country. "Stamp out the Black Stamp!" he shrieked; and there was no lack of echoes.

WHEN Disher reached Seasalter he found a placid Henry Moon with nothing to report. The remainder of the previous day had passed tranquilly and he had slept undisturbed. Doddy Peters remained in evidence, but unsuspiciously, and nobody had been across from the island, so far as he could gather. Henry asked Disher how events had progressed during his visit to town.

"So-so," Disher replied. "I have obtained a testimony to the integrity of butler Evered as excellent as you obtained to that of William Baines. I have seen how impossible it was for Albert Talbot to get out of the flat from which nevertheless, he did get, or was gotten. And I have been to Southend."

Henry Moon stared.

"I found," said Disher, "the man from whom he hired a rowboat for the holiday. And I also found a photographer who had four prints of Albert Talbot for which that gentleman had not called."

"Well," Henry Moon inquired. "What do you make of it?"

"For more than four days of his alleged week at Southend," Disher went on, "Albert Talbot was not in Southend at all."

"Good lord! Where was he?"

"I wonder! He left in a boat and he came back in it nearly five days later—with a different pair of oars. What do you think that means? As to where he had been, he said Herne Bay. I'd like you to make enquiries. It will be pretty easy to find out if there was a Southend boat at Herne Bay for four days, a month ago. If there was not, Albert Talbot was lying. If so, why? And if he had not been to Herne Bay, where had he been? And again, why?"

"This is getting interesting," said Henry.

"There's one place where he could have spent his four days much more easily than in rowing across to Herne Bay and back," said Disher, "and that is the Isle of Sheppey."

"Oh—" began Henry Moon, and broke off. "Why should he go to the Isle of Sheppey?" he asked.

"I wonder that, too," said Disher. "But hallo!—unless I am much mistaken here comes the pleasant Copeland to thank me for snatching his daughter from the clutches of the comic relief."

True, Copeland was ascending the steps, having come to thank Disher for the part he had played in rescuing his daughter and to invite both Disher and Henry Moon to spend the evening at his place in Sheppey. There was to be a garden fête.

When Copeland had departed Disher gave Henry Moon his instructions.

"I'm not going to guess at the reason for this invitation," he said, "although perhaps I could, without requiring to guess again. But we must make the most of our opportunity over there. I'll leave the girl to you and tackle Copeland myself. Find out what you can from her, but don't let her see you're pumping her."

Henry Moon plainly did not relish his allotted task.

"I hate having to cross-question *her*," he said. "Can't I tackle somebody else?"

"There is only the girl and Copeland I consider worthy of attention at the moment," Disher replied, "and as you're not skilful enough to be able to deal with Copeland I am afraid the arrangement must stand."

At four o'clock the boat arrived from Sheppey and they chugged over to the island. Copeland was there to meet them by the depressing jetty and he escorted them up the rise and thence on a tour round the strange little town, his daughter Anna accompanying them.

When T. C. Copeland had said that no holiday-maker would make holiday in this side-stepped seaside corner he had told the melancholy truth. In some way Thames Town was like a dusty box of broken toys, with the child grown up and gone across the world.

"Thames Town," Disher commented to Henry Moon, "has the appearance of being the scene of the invention of Sunday and the place where rain was given its first trial. And yet it is very nearly a very nice place indeed."

The little red Dr. Percy of the peculiar speech, appeared a moment or two later, in company with the gentleman gamekeeper, Mr. Mason Snow. It transpired that Mr. Mason Snow was Thames Town's schoolmaster, and nothing would satisfy him but that the visitors must make inspection of his school, which he exhibited rather as if it were his first-born. Dr. Percy displayed his house and his wife and his surgery in the manner of the curator of a museum; and then Copeland introduced a number of the artist fellows and the candidates for the dinner-party began to assemble at Sheppey Lodge.

More guests were arriving; artists and the hangers-on of Art, of every type and degree. Dr. Percy was there, with Mrs. Percy and Mr. and Mrs. Mason Snow, and the vicar from Thames Town's forlorn church, the Rev. Arthur Simmersley. There was also a middle-aged man in the most outrageous artistic attire—velvet jacket, "waterfall" tie and purple waistcoat—who smiled a great deal and seemed to enjoy the fun, but who never uttered a word. It was explained that this unfortunate gentleman had been a mute from his schooldays; but that luckily he was not deaf as well. A man of means, who had but lately taken up painting as a hobby, great things were expected of him before very long, and it was claimed for him that he was one of the brightest lights, artistically, in the whole of the little community. His name was Clift.

WITH the arrival of cigars the company separated into little parties, each going its own way and following its own inclinations. A gramophone was started on the lawn, about which some of the younger people began to dance, flitting like shadows of happiness in and out of the circles of colored light that lit up the lawn beneath the Chinese lanterns. The mute Clift hung pathetically on the fringe of an artistic discussion that arose, loud and heated, at the French windows of the drawing-room; and Disher found himself the conspicuous center of an intimate gathering at the end of the veranda: Disher, Copeland, Dr. Percy, Mason Snow and the vicar. Copeland, boyishly satisfied, hinted at the party's success and the possibility of repeating it.

Shortly after ten o'clock the party broke up. Copeland and his daughter, together with Mason Snow and the doctor, accompanied Disher and Henry Moon to the boat.

"Your hospitality must be returned," said Disher to Copeland as they walked down the slope to the beach. "We will arrange a suitable date and get your artist friends to hang their lanterns on the dismal hotel of brother Kale. Brother Kale requires startling to life. In a week's time, shall we say?"

"That will suit me admirably," said Copeland.

The two men were glad to get back to the inn where they could talk freely.

"Get to know anything from the girl?" asked Disher.

"Not a thing," said Moon. "As I have often said, I doubt if there is anything to know."

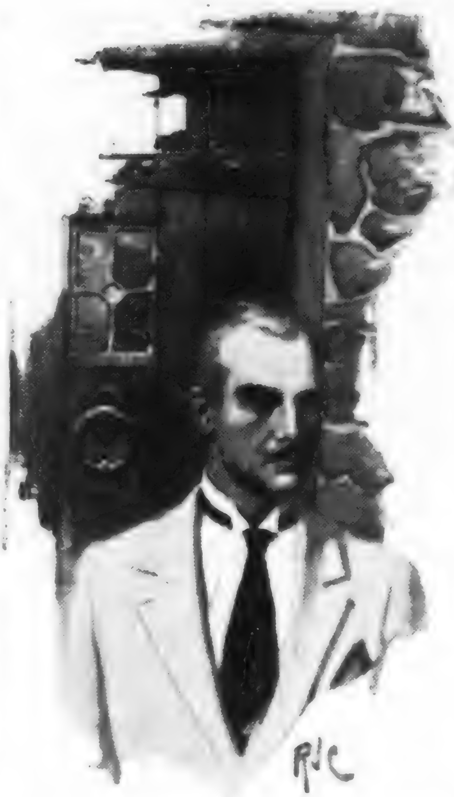
A pause, and then Disher said quickly: "Did you notice the collection of masterpieces produced by the painters of Thames Town?"

"I saw what Copeland showed us."

"I happen to know," said Disher, "as much about painting as I happen to know about most other things. Copeland showed us tonight examples of the work of twenty-three of his artist friends. He was not aware, perhaps, that I am sufficiently cultured to be able to say without hesitation that *all the examples are the work of one man*."

Henry Moon whistled.

"The art colony of Thames Town is a fine sham," Disher added. "And what I want to



T. C. Copeland was a tall and attractive man, with a carefully waxed mustache.

know at the moment is this: If the delightful company over there are not really artists—and I am convinced they are not—what are they?"

Up at their bedroom window he stood staring at a distant twinkling light that was Thames Town by night.

"Some day," he said, "I shall write an essay on the psychology of bluff. An entertaining theme. Well, I think I have bluffed them over there considerably more than they have bluffed me."

"You are quite certain they were bluffing you?" Henry asked.

"Why were we shown all over the place, even to the back rooms of the schoolhouse and the attics of Copeland's house? Why were we introduced to everybody? When a man goes out of his way to prove to me that he is hiding nothing I am eager to know what it is he is hiding. Thames Town would not have appeared half so suspicious if Copeland had not set out to show that it was above suspicion. It was a good bluff, but I put up a better. I have made them all believe that I am even cleverer than I am."

He turned from the window and sat down.

"Look here," said Henry Moon. "I'll admit that things seem a bit queer over there, but you've no proof at all that they're queer in a criminal way. You were pretty sure that the Black Stamp activities would confine themselves to the vicinity of the Thames Estuary, weren't you, right on Copeland's doorstep, as one might say. And then suddenly up pops the Black Stamp in Paris."

Disher yawned and put his hand in his pocket and brought something out.

"Of course, my dear fool," he said, "there may be nothing in it. But on the other hand there may be much. I found this in Copeland's study tonight—hidden away behind a bookcase."

He held out a box of cigarets of Continental manufacture, with the printed slip of a Parisian retailer gummed across the label.

On the night of Disher's dinner to the Copelands and their friends at the Hotel Desolation, Henry Moon was not present, and Disher explained that the young man had been called urgently to town by the illness of a relative. This explanation apparently sufficing, the company settled down to enjoy a pleasant evening. During the dinner Copeland was taken with what he termed a "slight touch of malaria" and returned to Sheppey, leaving the other dinner guests to follow four hours later. After bidding them good night at the shore, Disher returned to the Inn for the night. The clock had barely finished striking the hour of three, however, when Henry Moon burst in upon him.

Disher viewed his expression with some amusement, which did not serve to lessen his indignation. "What went wrong?" he demanded.

"Copeland got there almost as soon as I did myself."

"Brother Copeland, I suspect, suspected too," Disher replied. "In the middle of dinner he had an 'attack.' Malaria or something, he said it was, contracted abroad, and Dr. Percy, who was here, urged him to return home immediately. The rest, not wishing to break up the party, remained, and altogether I have had a hectic hour or two wondering what was happening to you."

"I have had a hectic hour or two myself, wondering the same thing!" Henry muttered. And he went on to relate his adventures.

"I went to Copeland's house," he continued, "and began to search it from top to bottom. In less than an hour, though, I thought I heard some one moving around in an ajoining room. When I looked, there was no one there. At that moment the outer door slammed, and I knew that Copeland was back. There was nothing to do but hide, so I slid under a bed and waited. Copeland came in, and, unsuspecting my presence, sat by the window waiting until the others returned from the dinner. Then he went to bed. Not until I heard him snoring did I dare move. And then I discovered that there was some one else hiding by my side under the bed."

Disher nodded and Henry Moon went on.

"I waited, not making a sound. Presently the other whispered, 'Get out, quick. I'll count ten and then I'll shoot.' He started counting. I realized that to cause a disturbance would waken Copeland and the game would be up.

So I slipped from under the bed, made my way downstairs in the dark, and here I am."

"Very interesting," said Disher. "And you say that neither of you actually saw the other!"

"That's a fact," said Henry Moon. "We *heard* each other, but in the lowest whispers, so that there was no chance of recognizing the voices. But I'll tell you what I did. I took the cap off my fountain-pen and decorated the other fellow's suit with ink-spots. We've got to watch out for the man with the ink-stained suit. It's a very strange thing, but I have an idea that the man under the bed was not hiding from Copeland but from *me*. In the general disclosure that must have come had Copeland been awakened I should have seen him, and that's what he was scared of—not Copeland. I feel sure of it."

"H'm," murmured Disher.

"Oh, and I got this," Henry went on, producing a tattered paper he had found in an ancient coat. "Is there anything to it?"

For some moments Disher examined the paper which proved to be a price-list of books. The subject of all the books listed was either criminal or international law, and five others besides the one already known to be in Copeland's possession were marked off with a little cross. The date on the top of the list was 1921.

Disher glanced up with a look of satisfaction on his face.

"It looks rather," he said, "as if the celebrated Copeland had been planning a certain something for a very long time."

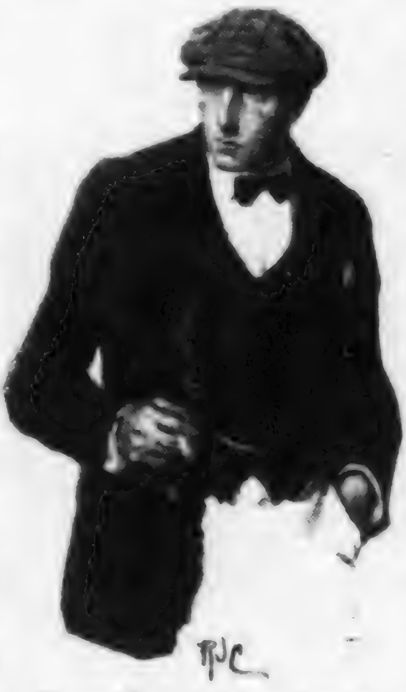
Henry Moon frowned. "What now?" he asked.

"Undoubtedly the next thing to be done is to sit down and leave the next move to the enemy," Disher replied. "Always, when possible, sit down and leave the next move to somebody else," and he sat.

"This fighting in the dark is getting too creepy for me," Henry replied. "I want to be out and hitting something. If only we knew just what it is we are up against. But as it is—"

"As it is," said Disher, "there is just a chance we may take the wind out of the enemy's sails by remaining in the dark ourselves."

Very soon the east began to pale. The two men sat at the window watching the distant island come out of the night, the leaden sea purify to gold, until there were sounds of Miles Kales stirring.



Henry Moon had been descreet and cautious for so many miserable weeks that now, to save his sanity, he wanted to shout.

Henry set out for a before-breakfast walk, but Disher—always loath to move—stayed behind and waited for Miles to bring the papers. Seasalter soon woke to life, and from the road came the trailing voice of the bounder, Pottar, raised in song.

Pottar whistled off key as he went by with his straw hat perched jauntily at the back of his head. Of Disher he took not the slightest notice, although the big man was peering keenly at him through his monocle. He went through the gate of the Starlight Bungalow and closed it with a kick behind him.

Shortly after Henry Moon came up the hotel steps.

"I had a minute's talk with the old dame at the Starlight Bungalow," he reported. "The other week, when I was making discreet inquiries about Pottar, she managed to get hold of the idea that perhaps when he left I'd take his rooms. She stopped me this morning to say that his holiday is over and that he is leaving tonight. He goes back to town."

"I see," said Disher. "Very well. And you go back with him."

"I?" Henry Moon stopped patting his damp brow to stare. "Why?"

"You passed him just now," said Disher. "Did you notice the left sleeve of his atrocious blazer?"

"No. Why? What is there?"

"Spilt ink," said Disher.

"Good Lord!" cried Henry Moon. "Pottar!"

That evening Pottar led Henry Moon, disguised as a day-laborer, on a wild goose chase, terminating, not in London, but at the parsonage on the Isle of Sheppey. Henry moved nearer the windows and peeped through at the mysterious Pottar.

For no revelation in his career had he been less prepared than for this which now met his eyes. Havoc was being wrought on the geography of Pottar's features. First the abominable blazer was thrown into a corner of the room, and after it the jaunty straw hat. Then the bounder's eyebrows were thrown carelessly on the fire, to be followed by the uncivil moustache. The Pottar flush vanished before a vigorous toweling, the Pottar crudeness went with it.

For Pottar, the bounder of Seasalter's beach, was none other than the Rev. Arthur Simmersley, the vicar of

Thames Town on the little Isle of Sheppey.

Henry Moon tried to think clearly. Pottar, the holder of secrets. Pottar, the kisser of unwilling girls. Pottar, the rolling, roistering midnight drunkard— This!

He sprang behind a bush. The light in the vicar's room had gone out and the front door was opening again. Softly and furtively as a sophisticated cat, Henry Moon tracked the ecclesiastic mystery down the silent village street, this time at last as far as the home of Copeland. From the courtyard behind he saw the two men meet in a back room and sit together by the fire, talking earnestly and long. Did Copeland know that Simmersley was Pottar, the assaulter of his daughter? Did anybody know? Was this secret a secret still from all but its creator and himself?

He stood back from the window and tried to form a plan of action. "If only I could have—" he began to think, and stopped.

A hand came out of the darkness behind and touched him on the shoulder. His temples tightened and his fists clenched. He sprang round.

"Who is it?" he gasped hoarsely.

"It is Disher," came the drawling reply. "Get out the bunting."

DISHER took Henry Moon's arm and led him away from the lighted window. Across the end of the courtyard was an open shed, its crazy roof supported by stout oak beams; and to this shed Disher now guided Henry Moon.

"Now tell me," said Disher, when they were in cover, "what you are doing here."

"Following Pottar," replied Henry.

"So he didn't go back to town after all?"

"He did not. He changed trains at Sittingbourne and came on here. I've had a priceless night of it, following him across the island."

"Where is he now?"

"In there with Copeland."

"I saw only Copeland and the vicar."

Henry Moon experienced a thrill of pride at the revelation to come.

"Pottar *is* the vicar!"

Disher gave a low whistle and fell silent. Henry Moon was the first to set talk going again.

"What if Copeland doesn't know? What if Simmersley has succeeded in keeping his secret from all the others on the island here? What if he and not Copeland should prove to be the mind—the blank mind—behind the strange Black Stamp?"

"No," said Disher. "And please don't start working on the notion that the mind behind the Black Stamp is a blank mind. Far from it. Nor is this organization for the purposes of man-obliteration the work of one man. It is big and far-flung. It reaches from here to Kentish Town, from Kentish Town to Paris, perhaps across the world, as we may soon see. No, I see the reason of Pottar's temporary being. Do you remember once saying to me that if Copeland were behind these outrages he would exercise his power to obliterate Pottar, the insulter of his daughter? You argued that from his omission to do this his innocence was proved. Henry Moon, that was exactly the idea he wished me to have. The thing was a great and skilful hoax, to prove by Pottar's non-disappearance the innocence of Copeland in the matter of these other disappearances. If he did not remove Pottar why should he trouble to remove the obscure Albert Talbot, whom nobody cared about? That was the line of reasoning he wished me to take. Well, I never took it, and tonight we have got through his bluff."

"Why—why should he trouble to remove the obscure Albert Talbot?" Henry questioned.

"I will tell you later."

"I don't believe you've the faintest idea."

"I don't believe I have," said Disher.

Henry was thinking deeply on some matter, and at length he put it into words.

"If that assault on the beach was a fake, it—implicates Anna—Miss Copeland."

"The whole crowd of 'em," said Disher. "The whole community is a sham, even down to the bleating sheep out there. Even to the dear vicar, as you see for yourself. Birds of a feather, you know."

Suddenly he nudged the other's arm and drew him closer to the cover of the wall. Not far away was a footstep, a footstep followed by a watching silence. Disher put his mouth to Henry Moon's ear and whispered: "Follow me." Then slowly and without disturbing so much as a twig he led the way round the dark wall of the courtyard until they were within a yard of the lighted window. Here they stood waiting for what seemed an age of time, until at last sudden footsteps crashed across the yard and round to the front of the house.

"Somebody's got our scent," Disher whispered. "Keep near the window here. Be ready for plenty of things happening."

They kept near the window, and indeed they risked much by looking through it. And soon they saw, with satisfaction, the inner door flung open and into the room staggered—babbling out words as quickly as they would come—the mute artist, Clift! But surprising as any words of Clift's must have been under the circumstances, even more surprising was the French language in which they were uttered.

"I heard footsteps in the courtyard, and whispering! There is somebody on the island! We are watched!"

"French!" Disher murmured. "So that's why he was 'mute,' eh? Knows no English, and it was not considered safe to have his native tongue about here so closely after the disappearance of the Foreign Minister. Probably head of the Black Stamp's Paris branch. I imagine that our mute friend could throw a little light on M. Lemère's disappearance, if we could talk to him quietly for a few minutes. You understand, don't you?"

They saw Copeland's face turn pale, saw the vicar spring to his feet and grip the "mute" by the shoulders. They then turned and hurried down the decayed street to the distant beach. Once they stopped and listened, thinking there was pursuit, but when they stopped the tiny sound behind stopped too, and they decided it was but the echo of their own flight. Then they imagined the sound was ahead, and after that they heard it no more.

When they were in the sanctum of their own room at the hotel, Disher turned suddenly to his colleague.

"Pack," he said curtly. "But be sure to leave your gun out."

"What's on?" said Henry.

"If we stay around here much longer they may drop the game before we know what it is," Disher replied. "They don't know that we know all the things we do. If we leave for London by the first train in the morning it may create the impression that we are—hopping it. An excellent impression to create. They won't hang themselves until they've been given more rope."

The high windows of Disher's parlor framed the trembling, sunlit dazzle of a little picture of a London afternoon; trees, with gray London houses peeping above them, and the vanishing flash of red buses. Disher stood in the bow of the window swinging his monocle round and round upon its ribbon, making a kind of rhythm for the drone of the day as it crept in through the window.

Presently he went to the table and picked up a cablegram, re-reading it for the third or fourth time that afternoon. "Cable if willing proceed New York investigate Harris mystery own terms Harris Sheridan Square NYC." He passed it to Henry Moon.

"Well, what's it about?" the young man asked after reading it.

"There seems to be several Harris mysteries," replied Disher. "There is, for instance, the mystery of why the celebrated Harris resides in Sheridan Square. Not, I may say, the platinum-filled quarter of New York City. And yet Harris is a very wealthy man. I have heard it said that he is a millionaire. He is head of Harris Steeleries in Pittsburg, where the present strike is assuming the dimensions of a Napoleonic war. But that is not the only mystery. I see you have not read your *Times* thoroughly today."

He passed the paper across the table, folded at a certain paragraph, and requested Henry Moon to read. Henry read:

STEEL KING BREAKS WINDOWS AND ASSAULTS POLICE

Millionaire's Novel Orgy

Mr. Hamilton Harris, the Pittsburg "steel king," was the central figure in an unusual incident in New York yesterday. A policeman discovered him breaking the windows of a number of shops in the vicinity of Irving Place and took him into custody. Mr. Harris immediately retaliated by tweaking the policeman's nose. It was only after he had been sentenced to three weeks' imprisonment that his identity was disclosed. The affair has produced a major sensation in business circles in New York, particularly as Mr. Hamilton Harris refuses to give any reason for his peculiar action, as he strongly deprecates any move to reduce his sentence or secure his freedom, declaring that he must take his punishment like the most obscure. The police doctor asserts that Harris was not under the influence of drink or drugs. It is thought that perhaps the strike at the Steeleries in Pittsburg may have had the effect . . .

"Well?" said Disher, when Henry Moon at length looked up.

"Mad," was Henry's verdict.

"Not mad," said Disher.

"Shall you go?"

"I don't know. It might throw the Copeland gang off the scent for a time if they thought I had given up their case. They would be sure to hear I had gone."

"You could do with the change," said Henry Moon.

Disher frowned at the cablegram and tucked it away in his pocket. "We will go to America," he said suddenly; and he sent Henry Moon out by the back way to cable assent to faraway Sheridan Square.

ON THE morning of the fifteenth of September, Disher and Henry Moon, together with a small mountain of luggage, departed in a blue taxicab from a gangway in New York City for the residence of Mrs. James M'Guinness, formerly of Cork, and one time of Laburnam Terrace, Streatham Hill, in the county of London. The city of incredible towers was waking to the day's work, and a vast horde of men and women, nearly all of them young, and looking to English eyes at once both foreign and familiar, were pouring into Manhattan.

The taxi turned northward on streets unvanquished yet by the early sunlight, turned into Washington Square, where stood the house of the renowned Mrs. M'Guinness. "Hotels can be dangerous," said Disher, "and taxis too. If I should leave you to your own devices during the next few days, keep to the cars or the subways. A taxi-driver's badge may cover a multitude of sins. If the enemy cares to hang up a stocking it is no reason why we should play Santa Claus."

Mrs. M'Guinness, a lady of amazing girth, immediately appointed herself foster-mother to the visitors, fussing over them and attending to their slightest wants as if they were her own children, come home after a long absence. She had a son, Patrick, who wore the blue of the New York Police, and Patrick it was who had met the great Mr. Disher before, back in London when he was not a policeman at all. Patrick was in the foreground of the welcome, an out-size of a fellow. He gripped the hand of Henry Moon to the point of torture and beamed like a sun and rubbed his sleeve sheepishly in the presence of Disher.

Pat carried their luggage upstairs to rooms looking down on the square and the big arch—cosy rooms, not quite English and not quite Irish and not quite American, but a very satisfying blend of the three.

"Patrick," said Disher, bringing a heavy hand down on the young officer's shoulder, "I take it that you know your way about in this big city—that you won't, for example, need a map of the underworld, when you set out on a visit?"

"Well, sir, look at me stripes!" Patrick grinned.

"I want to buy a shadow," Disher explained, "an official one. I don't know that I'll be followed through your town during my visit, but if I am I shall require a follower to follow the follower. You are familiar with the process, Patrick. Can you provide a good sample? Not too scrupulous. It may be necessary for Follower Number One to be given a little holiday."

Patrick sucked his pipe and contemplated the pattern on the carpet.

"Spotty M'Gee's your man, sir," he said at last. "Spotty's a tough lot, an' no mistake. I reckon he's one o' the shadiest nuts in all New York at this moment. He's so slick I've never been able to prove a thing aginst him in five year, an' so we're great pals an' he'd do anythin' for me, sir, an' me for him. But I'll get the little sweep some day, as true as I'm standin' here, and I'm tellin' ye. Yes, sir, I can personally recommend Mister M'Gee for anythin' shady ye want done. Ye'll not find a better."

"He wouldn't be open to being bought over by the enemy, do you think?"

"Ye can trust Spotty, sir. For a mean sneak of a pocket-pickin' crook he's as honest as the day is long."

"He certainly sounds good, Patrick," Disher admitted. "Do you think you could produce Mr. M'Gee for inspection?"

Patrick thought he could, and did, within an hour. Spotty was a very tall and very thin young man, wasted and immaculate and fragile-looking, and as he never quite straightened out at his elbows or his knees he created the idea that if he were to do so he might snap. He had a sad face, and an extraordinary economy of speech. Stepping sprily into the room and keeping his hat on, he bowed to everybody, shook hands with Henry Moon only, and sat down on the extreme edge of the most uncomfortable chair in the place.

"This is Spotty M'Gee," Patrick announced.

"Howuh," said Spotty.

"I am charmed to have had the opportunity of meeting you, Mr. M'Gee," said Disher. "I trust we shall get on well together, and part each a little the richer in culture for the contact. I suppose that our excellent friend Patrick has explained to you just exactly what it is that I shall require?"

"Hu-huh," said Spotty.

"I take it you are assenting. I don't know that I shall be followed," said Disher, "although I usually am followed. In this case it will be your duty to stick to the gentle follower like a brother."

"Hu-huh," said Spotty.

"You can take up your duties at once?"

"Hu-huh," said Spotty.

"Then would you mind slipping out and waiting for me down in the corner of the Square? You can pick me up when I depart for Sheridan Square very shortly. There's no need to talk about terms?" Spotty shook his head. "Name your own when the deal's through."

"Aruh," said Spotty.

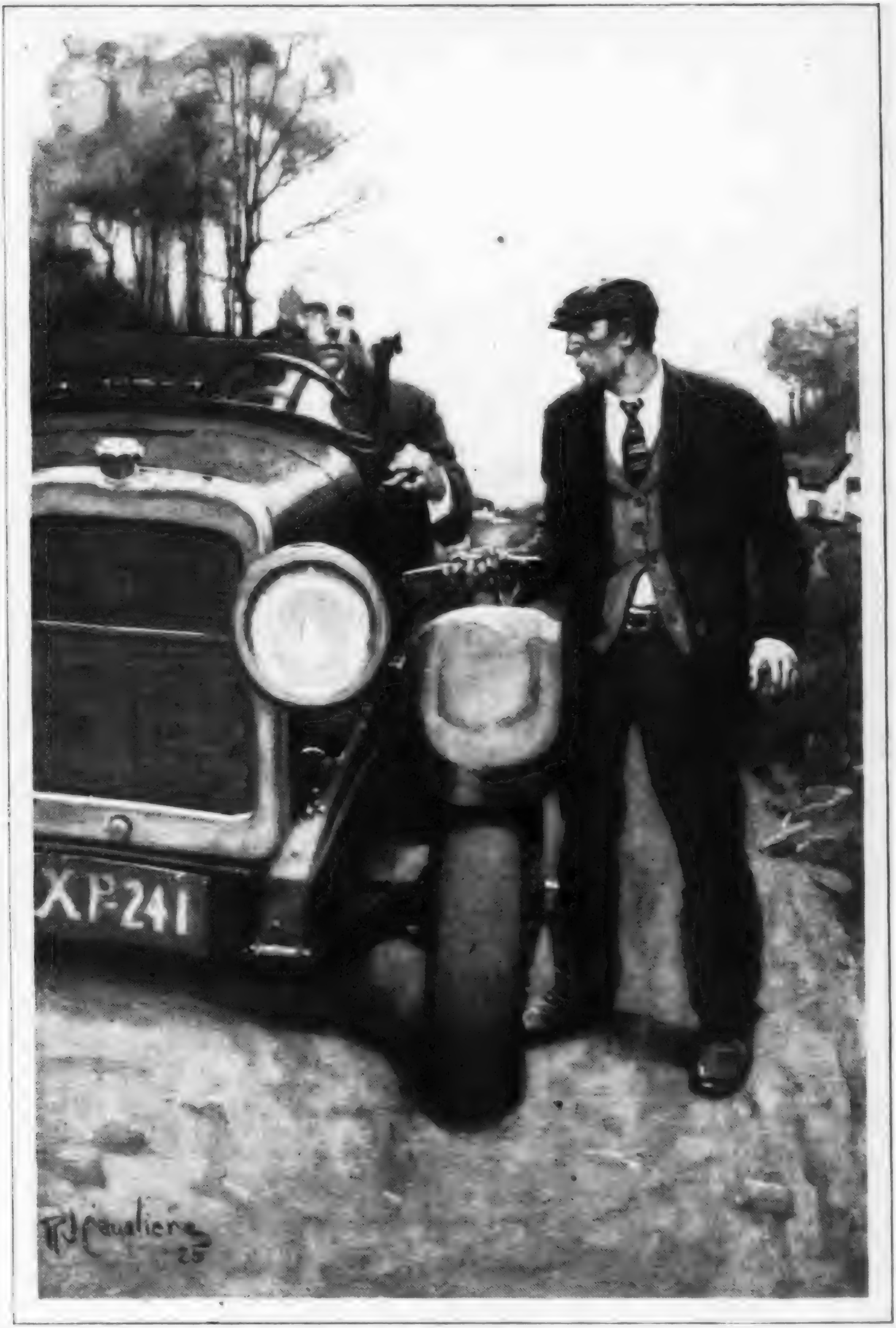
"Very well, then, Mr. M'Gee."

SPOTTY rose, blinked, nodded all around, and sprily vanished downstairs.

After lunch Disher went off to take up the first threads in the peculiar mystery of Hamilton Harris, and Henry ventured forth to make a closer acquaintance with the city.

Disher was the first to return to the M'Guinness home and Henry found him dozing in an armchair. Disher had a puzzling story to relate. "I got to Sheridan Square," he said, "and found Harris's secretary. He told me a remarkable tale. On the morning of the day when Harris indulged in his momentous plot he rang for the secretary person, left instructions that a cable was to be sent to me in England, and then immediately went out and caused himself to be arrested. The secretary has since received a letter from Harris in prison, asking that if I should respond to the invitation I be taken to the prison gates on the morning of his release, which will be in two days' time."

That evening, over coffee in one of Broadway's most glittering palaces, they discussed the night's entertainment; and eventually "Bessie, Behave!" (Laughter set to Music) a native-made show, which was the moment's sensation, won their favor.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While walking on Leydown Road, Spotty heard a car approaching and, seeing it to be the doctor's, stopped it and wormed what information he wanted from Dr. Percy.

As they left the theater, newsboys were running across the Square outside shouting hoarsely. Henry Moon bought a paper and made his way back to Disher's side.

"Lord!" he cried, opening the damp and smudgy sheet, "see what's happened! This damned business is impossible to get away from."

In great red letters the newspapers announced that at last the terror had touched America.

BLACK STAMP ARRIVES! ! !
WASHINGTON STRICKEN!

Senator Maggsley Gone!

CITY SWEPT BY TERROR! !

Disher read the headlines with an annoying lack of interest. He was more concerned in the disappearance of Spotty M'Gee who had been in sight all evening and he showed Henry Moon into a taxi.

"There are still plenty of Senators. But there is only one Spotty M'Gee," he said coolly. "We will return home and wait for his report."

BEFORE Disher had finished his breakfast at the M'Guinness house Spotty appeared and made his report. The previous evening he had followed a certain young man whose face was vaguely familiar to Henry Moon and whom he had suspected of following him that afternoon. In a cable office Spotty had come upon him busily scribbling out a cable form. A few soft-spoken words, together with a revolver sheltered in the palm of his hand, had persuaded the young man to follow Mr. M'Gee to the street where they boarded a taxi and drove to the Jersey shore. Having secured his prisoner in a deserted house and stationed a fellow conspirator to guard him, Spotty had returned for further orders.

"Don't know what to do, less we kill 't," he said in conclusion. "I'd have left 't alone if 't hadn't tried to cable. Thought y' wouldn't like that. Here's the cable. I lifted 't. What we gotter do?"

Disher smoothed out the crumpled sheet on the table. It could scarcely be said that the cable was either suspicious or informative to the uninitiated, yet Disher frowned as he read it aloud to Henry Moon.

"Broderick 12 Mansfield Gardens Kensington London England. Consignment arrived safely. Own market apparently not affected. Craig."

"What's it mean?" Henry asked.

"It means a journey to Hoboken," Disher replied. "Hurry with your breakfast, Henry Moon."

Henry Moon took the hint and within an hour they had crossed to the Jersey side and were inside the house on the Hoboken marshes.

"Well," said Disher, "and what have you to say for yourself? The excellent Mr. M'Gee informs me that you spent three hours of yesterday in shadowing me. Why?"

The other had nothing to say for himself.

"Come," said Disher. "Now that the home market is so direly affected, surely you are willing to open negotiations with the other firm. What do you suggest?"

But the young man suggested nothing.

"Say the word," muttered Mr. M'Gee, "and I'll kill 't. 'T'll be safer dead. An' 't'll cost less."

"Not for worlds would I have any harm come to my friend, my dear Mr. M'Gee," said Disher. "You have misunderstood your instructions. I shall want you to be not so much his keeper as his nurse."

"He certainly needs one," grumbled Spotty. "Kicked the window through an' yelled for help when Bluggy was comin' up the road. He got the idea, maybe, I was a beginner. Let me poison his milk."

But Disher was not listening. He had taken a seat in front of the captive and was looking at him intently. After a moment he sat back.

"I think I have it," he said in a low voice. "The resemblance that baffled you so long, Henry Moon. Take another look and have a guess."

"No," said Henry after the inspection. "I'm still in the dark."

"Well," said Disher, "how would you like him for a brother-in-law?"

"What!"

Disher leaned forward and tapped the young man on the knee.

"Come, Mr. Copeland," he said, "drop the bluff. Between friends it is scarcely the thing, you know. Can't we know you as well as we know your father, or your sister Anna?"

"Good lord!" gasped Henry Moon.

Young Copeland turned away sullenly.

"Now?" said Disher to young Copeland.

"I have nothing to say," was the response. "Do please understand that. I have nothing to say, now or at any time. Your—friends here cannot make me speak. Let them try, if you don't believe me. That is all I have to say."

Disher nodded.

"Very well. Then I am afraid I must ask you to remain my guest here for a few days longer, Mr. Copeland. I am not blaming you. Placed as you are placed I should do exactly as you are doing, only better. However, you may leave it to me to see that you come to no harm. Good-by."

Disher beckoned to Henry Moon and Spotty and then went out into the shabby vestibule. "This is no place in which to offer hospitality to a friend," Disher suggested, leading the way upstairs. He looked into all the rooms and sighed desperately. There were no carpets on the floors, no furnishings but crude tables and chairs and camp beds. Old newspapers covered the shelves in dingy cupboards. One of these Disher dragged from its place and sent a cloud of thick dust to join the thicker layer on the floor. "1909," was the date he read from it. "What is this place?" he asked. "And has nobody lived here since 1909?"

"B'longs to the boys," Spotty explained. "Nobody lives in 't for keeps, but 't comes in useful. Used to b'long to Spike O'Day, back in 1909 or so, but Spike stopped a bullet, an' none of us has had the heart to clean it up since. We don't often come."

"Is there no nicer place in which you could keep Mr. Copeland? Some place, we'll say, farther in the country—where perhaps he'd have less chance of attracting notice if he cared to raise his voice? You may have him in your charge for three or four weeks, and I shouldn't say he'd be safe here all that time."

"Say what tune y' like an' I'll play it," said Spotty. "I know a place way up the river, twenty miles. Back in a wood, it is. He'd be safe as in a zoo there. Plenty o' the boys to look after him."

"That sounds better. When can you have him removed?"

"Soon as it's dark tonight?"

"That will do excellently. And remember, Mr. M'Gee—no violence. When Mr. Copeland leaves your care I'd like him to have put on weight. I'd like him to leave you with reluctance, if you understand just what I mean."

Mr. M'Gee gave a solemn promise and then Disher and Henry Moon set off to walk to Hoboken station.

"You've still got the only original newspaper in your hand," said Henry Moon as they gained the highway.

"I know," said Disher, folding it and holding it out. "Look at that."

Henry looked. It was the picture of a young man of about thirty years of age, clean-shaven, with small, twinkling eyes, and prominent bushy eyebrows. The name beneath the picture was Thomas Charles Cope. The letterpiece to the right intimated that the police were despairing of ever being able to trace Cope, who was an escaped murderer out of Kansas City jail. At that date, the 9th of July, 1909, he had been free for five months, and not a single clue to his whereabouts had been discovered in all the length and breadth of the United States. It was believed that he had succeeded in getting out of the country, probably to Europe or Australia.

"Seventeen years," said Disher. "As completely out of sight as if he had received one of his own black stamps. Well, now we have a subject for discourse, eh?"

"Don't expect me to talk," said Henry Moon bitterly. "I—I'm knocked. Copeland a murderer! And—young Copeland here. Anna's brother! I didn't understand she had a brother."

"No," said Disher, "the Cope or Copeland family tree was not one of the things exhibited as above suspicion that day on Sheppey."

DURING the afternoon Disher despatched a cable to a reliable man in London, a man who had often in the past proved of service to him, requesting that particulars in code be sent out to him of a person or persons named Broderick, residing at 12 Mansfield Gardens, Kensington. After which he paid another visit to Sheridan Square and there arranged with Hamilton Harris's secretary a time for their meeting next morning.

At the appointed hour on the following morning Disher and the secretary, a rather dull young man of the name of Moss, accompanied by Henry Moon, set off for the prison, where they were courteously received by the warden, in whose private office they met the world-renowned steel king on his release. Hamilton Harris was a tall and loose-limbed man, rather ungainly and inclined to be untidy in his person, and obviously of Scottish origin, although certain unexpected Americanisms had succeeded in grafting themselves on to his native tongue. His cheeks were not so much cheeks as surprising cavities, and his cheek-bones were of such startling prominence that they seemed to have squeezed his eyes permanently closed. Standing in the doorway of the warden's office, turning his beak-like face swiftly from one to another of the four men before him he had all the appearance of some monster bird; and when he came forward gawkily to take his big visitor by the hand it was like an eagle settling on a branch. He smiled, and it was like a fall in the thermometer.

"Mister Disher?" he said.

Disher bowed.

"Aye, well. . . ." Harris turned and nodded to the warden. "You'll not be wanting to detain me any longer, I'm thinking? I'll bid you good-by, Captain. I'll say my treatment couldn't have been better. Next time I'm due for prison it'll be this prison."

When all were seated in the taxi he said to Disher:

"Is there some place we can go where the quiet will be guaranteed? I have been eighteen years in this city and never found one yet."

Disher suggested his rooms in Washington Square, and he gave the necessary instructions to the driver. It was not until they were actually within the sitting-room of Disher's apartments that Harris gave sign of being communicative.

"Well," he said, "let's come to business. You'll know all about me. I've been in the States now eighteen years, as I told you, and I flatter myself there's mighty few places where the name of Harris isn't known. And people'll tell you I've accumulated a piece o' money in that time. I'm not boasting. But what I'm leaidn' up to is that a man of my prominence is pretty sure to make a considerable number of enemies in eighteen years, whether he wants to or not. You see what I mean?"

"Quite," said Disher.

"I've made enemies, and I know it. I deal firmly wi' the people under me. Take this strike in Pittsburg. I'll give you my word I'm not handling that in a weak way. I've got my thumb on 'em and I'm pressing hard. It's the only way to do it. All the same, it makes enemies for a man, and maybe my enemies are beginning to get a wee bit restive now. Maybe, I say. It might be something else, mind."

He turned, snapping his fingers, to his secretary, Moss.

"The letter," he said testily.

Moss opened a brief-case and handed a sealed envelope to Harris. Tearing the flap, the steel king took out a smaller and opened envelope, from which he produced an oft-folded letter.

Disher opened the letter, glanced at it casually, yawned, refolded the letter and handed it back, seeming scarcely interested.

"It is the usual Black Stamp letter," said Disher. "They are becoming quite common, and in themselves have ceased to be objects of interest. We might say that no home is complete without one. Proceed, Mr. Harris."

Harris sniffed.

"I'm the seventh to get this warning," he said. "Ye know what happened to the other six? Well, I made up my mind that it wasn't goin' to happen to me. I thought pretty swiftly when I opened this letter. I've heard tell ye're the smartest fellow in this detective business, an' I made up my mind I'd have ye come over if I could find ye. The difficulty was that it was going to take a week or two for ye to get here, and from what we can get to know of 'em the Black Stampers aren't used to waitin' weeks. Now, I might have hired a guard or called in the police. But I had my doubts about 'em. I wanted to feel dead safe. So ye know what I did. I went out an' smashed a window an' got put away, an' I reckon that if the Black Stampers could ha' got me out o' prison they wair welcome to me, an' that's a fact. I think ye'll allow it was a smart scheme?"

"A very smart scheme indeed, Mr. Harris. And what might you want me to do now?"

"I want ye to live with me and see if we can't trip up this Mr. Wiseman just when he thinks he's pullin' off his seventh winner. I'll claim to beat any thieving set of rascally workmen in the State, Mr. Disher, but I'll not claim I can beat what I can't see, an' no mon's seen the Black Stamp yet. That's your job. It's for that I've brought ye all this way. Will ye come in an' live with me like my own brother, and if this precious Black Stamp appears—get it? Will ye do that?"

"Do you propose," Disher asked, "to sit down and wait for the attack in Sheridan Square, or over in your Long Island home? The Long Island place will be better, if I may suggest it. Perhaps it might be easier there for the attack to take place, but it would be more difficult for the attacker to get away. The nearest house is a good quarter of a mile off and we could set watchers at close intervals and have a trap on the Rockaway Road."

Harris sat forward in his chair, gaping.

"Say!" he exclaimed, "ye appear to know quite a number of things."

"I do," said Disher. "Have a cigar?"

"I don't want your cigars," said the steel king sharply. "I want your answer."

"My answer," said Disher, "is yes. I'll come and live with you for some time, and—get the Black Stamp, if it appears."

"Well, Mr. Disher, ye've a strange manner. Ye're like ye thought ye'd made the airth an' the waters under the airth an' all that therein is, in seven days. But a man with yere taste in cigars is sound at heart, I'm thinkin'. Ye mustn't get to mindin' my tongue. I'm used to beatin' the other feller before the fight starts an' it's mebbe made me a bit sharp."

Secretary Moss was sent about his business and arrangements were made with Henry Moon for that young man to continue indefinitely at Washington Square until such time as Disher was free to leave Long Island, in the meantime paying a daily visit there to make his report.

THE Long Island home of Hamilton Harris lay back across lawns so incredibly spacious that it seemed less a house than a picture drawn in a book for a child. Some said it had been built to give the steel king added opportunity for ostentation, but at any rate it was something to boast about. Disher strode the terraces and sat on the lawns with a keener joy than he had shown for many a day. The great place fitted him, he said, like a glove; and he proceeded to wear it with a zest as gigantic as himself.

Each afternoon Henry Moon came out to Long Island, to gather rather than to impart news, for he had none to bring. But on the third day his settling calm was so obviously ruffled again that Disher begged Harris to excuse him for some moments and led Henry across the lawn to a seat beneath a tree, from which, however, the steel king was all the time in sight. Henry took a letter from his pocket.

"Mangan's sent his report about those people

Broderick, of Kensington, that young Copeland was cabling to. I've decoded the thing and brought the copy. Seems pretty empty."

Disher read Mangan's report, which ran thus:

> Tactfully approached Mrs. Broderick, 12 Mansfield Gardens Kensington. Subject of independent means. Apparently no connection America. Highly respected and well liked in Kensington. Charity organizer and keen church worker. Widow, living alone with servants, about sixty-five years of age, looks rather like old picture of Queen Victoria. Regret unable to add to these details. MANGAN.

"Nothing much in it?" said Henry, when Disher's monocle dropped.

"You think not? Well, there is this in it. You remember the old lady I went to see in Palace Walk—the old lady who employed Mark Amber's butler, Evered, before he went to Broadstairs? That was the old lady to whom young Copeland cables. That was this old lady who looks like a picture of Queen Victoria. What do you make of that?"

"Evered? Copeland?" Henry Moon looked stunned, and could have said little less had he been stunned indeed.

"The pieces of the puzzle are fitting together," Disher went on. "They're making a picture, even if the picture isn't making sense just yet. But it will, very soon. Take the pieces that already fit together here. The Black Stamp—Mark Amber, who received the Black Stamp—Evered, who was employed by Mark Amber—Mrs. Broderick, who employed Evered—young Copeland here, who corresponds with Mrs. Broderick—and young Copeland's father, T. C., of Sheppey Island. And, to join up the two ends and make a vicious circle of it—T. C. Copeland and the Black Stamp. Do you still persist that there is no connection between the two?"

Henry Moon changed the subject, and shortly after, left for town.

At sunset they retired to the steel king's second floor suite, where nightly they put up their defenses against the invisible enemy. By the sitting room only was it possible to enter or leave, for this was the only room of the three with a door on the corridor. It was a room of rather unexpected spaces, filled with excellent furniture and, with great oil paintings that reached from the top of the low paneling to the distant ceiling. There were, of course, windows, but these had been heavily barred within three hours of Disher's arrival, by his orders, and were now no longer a source of concern. Behind the sitting room was the small bedroom, and again, behind this, yet smaller, the millionaire's bathroom.

At half-past ten, after a light supper, the two men prepared to sit for an hour smoking and talking. Harris, however, made a failure of it from the first. He was petulant and hasty, grumbled at the passive resistance they were obliged to keep up.

"I can get no sense out of ye," he snapped. "You're a man living behind a wall o' wairds, an' there's no gettin' near ye. I'd be more profitably employed asleep. Listenin' to ye is weakenin' for the nairves. I'm goin' to bed."

"An institution," Disher observed, "that has no parallel in the story of civilization."

He went his nightly round, leaving Harris to lose his temper over a stud. First he inspected the window-fastenings, the bars and the chimneys; then he opened wardrobes and chests, lifted hangings, opened the door on the corridor and swept the corridor itself with his electric torch. He closed the door and locked it. These things he did every night, but tonight inspiration provided him with extra cautions. He took a length of thread from his pocket and broke off a piece not more than two inches long. This he laid carefully across the shaft of the big bronze knob, so that if the door were opened the thread must fall at once to the floor. To the uninitiated this little trap was invisible. Disher then took a pencil from his pocket and a wineglass from the table and went through into the bathroom.

"What ye doin'?" Harris, in the bedroom, demanded.

"Making doubly sure," Disher replied. "If the Black Stamp agent *has* the power to get past iron bars we will make him announce his call."

He dragged a chair to the bathroom window and stood upon it. Then thrusting the pencil down between the sashes he precariously balanced the inverted wineglass upon it, having first broken off the stem. "There is no way," he said, "in which a man outside the window can remove that glass without coming in through the window, and the moment he attempts that the glass falls and we are roused. Simple, but clever. A child's trick. But the simple things are the great things, my dear Harris."

BUT Harris did not pursue the subject, not very desirous of hearing his further views upon it. He was just beginning to hum a little air, when suddenly the suite was plunged in darkness and a scream echoed through the rooms.

"Disher! Disher! Quick, man! The—the damned thing."

It trailed away to a gurgle and then all was still. Disher sprang down from the chair and ran through into the bedroom. He had very early made himself perfectly acquainted with the light switches, and now, kicking a chair aside, he sprang to the farthest wall and pressed the knob. Light flooded the rooms again and he turned swiftly, gave a quick glance round the bedroom and hurried through into the sitting room.

"Harris!" he called. "Where are you?"

There was no response. Up the stairs from the lower floor he could hear the servants, roused by the scream, hurrying to the suite. He passed rapidly from room to room and back again, examining every possible nook in which a man might hide, tearing down hangings ruthlessly in the process; but of Harris there was no trace. The broken wineglass still dangled precariously from the stupid-looking pencil in the window-frame. He knelt before the door and swore loudly when he found the little length of thread still in its place.

"Heaven and Hell!" he muttered.

The servants were knocking on the door and demanding admittance.

"Wait!" cried Disher. And he hurried again from room to room, tapping walls, dragging carpets from their place, even, by standing on a high chair and using a walking stick, sounding the ceiling above. Then he threw up a window and blew a shrill blast on a police whistle. Answering calls were given by the guard at different points of the grounds, and little flashes of light showed where the men were beginning to close in. Disher went to the door and flung it open.

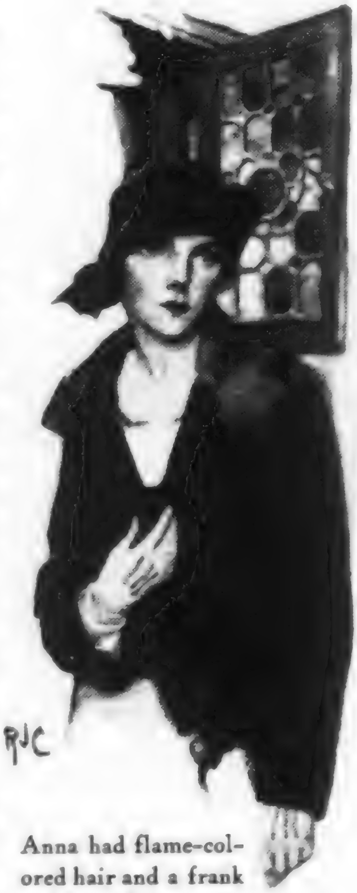
"Your master has disappeared!" he announced. "Go all over the house quickly and search every room. Now—not tomorrow!"

Driving them before him like sheep, he began to pace feverishly up and down the corridor. He sank on his hands and knees and stared closely at the carpet, and then slowly he worked his way back to the door of Harris's suite.

"He has gone," he muttered. "There is no way by which he could go. Then by what way has he gone?"

Disher remained across the water for a short time after Hamilton Harris went to join Senator Maggsley in the Otherwhere. He spent many hours sitting in a great chair staring at a door, thinking unthinkable thoughts.

Once he stooped to action. To Mangan in London he sent a peculiar cablegram. "*Make at once searching inquiries into past of Scottish innkeeper claimed by Black Stamp in Perth on 2nd Sept.*"



Anna had flame-colored hair and a frank and friendly manner.

One purple night above the river there, when even the wild city was hushed before the unknown, he stood deep in thought beneath a tree, leaning upon a cold stone wall, watching the twinkling lights of Jersey across the Hudson. Henry Moon stood by dutifully and soon Disher spoke.

"I am still free," he said. "I am still free, and in my freedom somehow lies the solution of this puzzle. The Black Stamp picks here and picks there, but always it is careful to leave me unmolested. Why? I am the Black Stamp's deadliest enemy. It is seemingly all-powerful, and yet it won't fight me. Why? Why? Why?"

And then out of the gloom came a woman and saw Henry Moon and stopped before him. He looked up, and their eyes met. She was a young woman and her hair was a dazzling red. Henry rose unsteadily to his feet and removed his hat.

"Miss Copeland!" he murmured. "Anna! Here!"

"Once," said Anna Copeland, in a dull tone that did not hold spirit enough to be a sigh—"once you asked me to marry you, and I said no." She paused and looked away, but suddenly held her head erect and faced him. "Ask me again," she said.

"Why—but—" Henry Moon faltered.

"I shall say—yes."

Disher came out of the black tree's shade and stood at Anna Copeland's side.

"Can you tell me, Miss Copeland," he asked in a low voice, "why the man in the gray hat over in the bushes there should be sufficiently interested in you to spy upon your movements?"

The girl half turned from Henry Moon and followed Disher's line of sight to where, a hundred yards off, two lovers came together in an embrace beneath a tree. There was no moon. At a hundred yards the lovers might have been anything—even a spy in a gray felt hat.

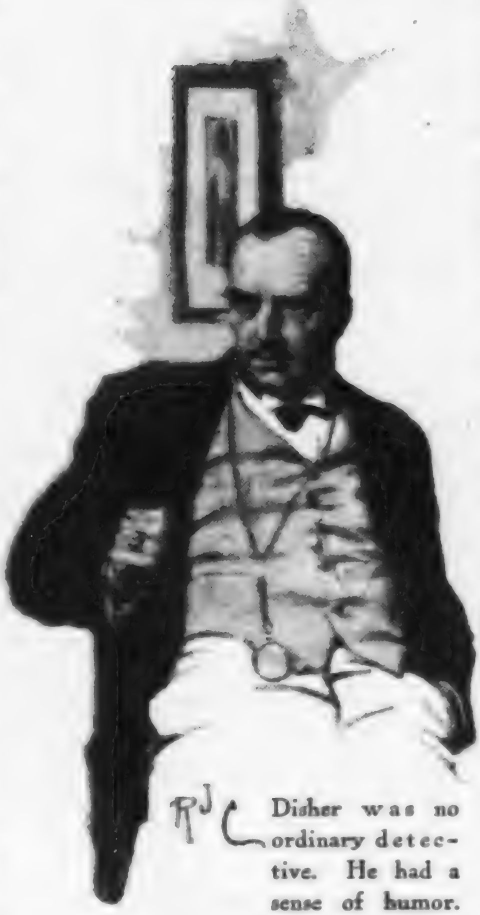
"Watching me?" she cried.

"Come to the subway quickly," Disher commanded.

"No, let's take a taxi," Anna said.

Though these three last had met far across the world, Riverside Drive might have been the Tower Hill at Tankerton for all the surprise that showed in their meeting. Hurrying to the curb they hailed a taxi and gave the driver Mrs. M'Guinness's number.

Patrick was in the hall when they entered the house on Washington Square. Disher drew him aside and told him that Spotty had been following Anna. He



Disher was no ordinary detective. He had a sense of humor.

sent word to him by Patrick to watch the house, and then the three passed upstairs to Disher's sitting-room.

"Sit here, Miss Copeland," Disher offered, bringing forward the best chair. "On ordinary occasions I always claim it for myself; but this is scarcely an ordinary occasion?"

He rang the bell, and when Mrs. M'Guinness appeared he requested and was promised the best meal in history. After Mrs. M'Guinness's departure on her solemn mission Disher left the young couple alone for a few minutes—alone, but not unobserved, though they did not know it.

In a few moments Disher returned and sat opposite them, fixing his monocle and placing the tips of his fat fingers together.

"Life, Miss Copeland," he said, "is a hat, out of which the Great Conjuror brings an endless string of surprises. It takes a great deal to surprise me. On the whole, I do not think very much of the entertainment. But tonight you may flatter yourself that you have surprised me. Here am I on the top of New York, thinking of you as some thousands of miles away, and suddenly you appear by my side. A very neat trick indeed. There may be something in the hat, after all."

Anna's eyebrows arched.

"I am honored. Perhaps it was surprising, our meeting up there. As I knew you were in New York I was not surprised. I have been telling Henry that the papers have got the story of your coming here. It was—it was because you were here that I came to New York."

Disher waited.

"I am going to marry Henry," said Anna simply.

"Yes, I know," said Disher.

"You know? But—"

"I knew months ago, the first time I met you on the veranda at the Driftwood Inn."

"Oh!"

"May I offer my congratulations to you both?"

"Thank you."

He rose and they shook hands gravely.

After an elaborate supper, during which only Disher radiated geniality, the girl prepared to take her departure. "I am staying," she told them, "at the Grand Metropolitan."

Henry rose to accompany her and Disher went with them as far as the door. Across the road, nonchalantly watching the house, Spotty M'Gee was to be seen.

"That is the fellow!" Disher cried pointing. "Then we did not shake him off, after all?"

Henry Moon glanced at Anna and found her gone suddenly limp.

"But—why?" she murmured. "Why—should he—?"

Disher closed the door.

"He will grow tired first," he said. "Miss Copeland, I am going to ask you to be my guest here. Mrs. M'Guinness will find you a room. In the morning, if the fellow has not left us, we will have a reckoning with him. But for the moment I advise caution. This is a strange world we are living in and strange things can happen to the least deserving of us. I cannot permit you to leave this house tonight."

SPOTTY M'GEE was still over the road next morning, looking like a man willing to remain over the road for the rest of his days and die there still enthusiastic. Disher advised Anna Copeland to remain a little longer in the house, to be unperturbed and to banish all fears for her personal safety.

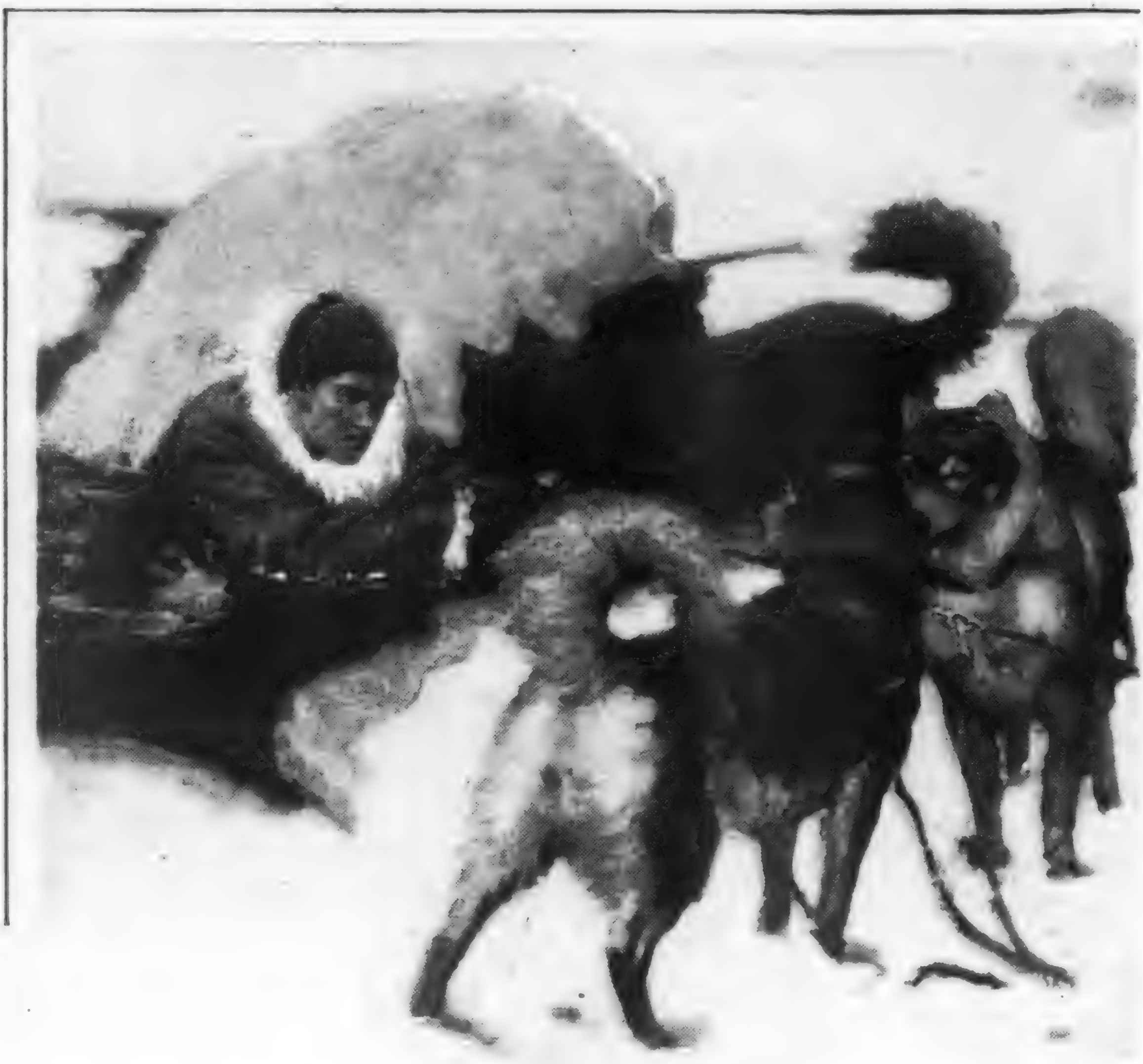
After consideration Anna agreed to stay, and when after breakfast the men departed she settled down with a heap of magazines, as far from the window as possible.

Disher and Henry Moon, the young man sullen and uncommunicative, walked down the Square without as much as a glace toward Spotty. They took a quick train to Long Island and were very soon in the home of Hamilton Harris.

"I may be wrong," he said when he had closed the door of the upstairs suite. "But if I am wrong now, I will say that there is no way in which a man can be right. Let us see."

He locked the door. From his pocket he took a length of thread, the very length, indeed, which he had used during his vigil with

[*Continued on page 138*]



"Stick it, boy," the sergeant panted between chattering teeth. "Stick, Dawson-boy—stick—laddie." Skag dug and gripped and strained, a living winch—but the slush was beginning to move.

Skag

A pet of the Royal Mounted proves

JUST opposite Fairwell Island, where the Polar Seas become British, the schooner dropped anchor, let slip its stay-sails and lay passive to swing with the tide.

In the long, chicken-wired pen that lay up forward of the for'ard deck-house, Skag moved about uneasily, his shaggy gray coat all a-silver in the sunlight, his almond-shaped eyes squinting and his short, pointed ears pricked expectantly toward the island. Something, he was sure, was in the wind, something was imminent. Just what that "something" might be, however, was more than his brute mind could determine.

None of the six other dogs in the pen—all gray malamutes like himself—paid the least attention to what had happened, they found no significance in the fact that this was the first time since they had left Whitehorse that the great chain up in the bows had rattled. But

By Robert Roy

Illustrated by Ray C. Strang

his right to lead the pack

with Skag it mattered, anything out of the ordinary mattered, and he felt a decided responsibility for the team's welfare—for Skag was a lead-dog.

Scarcely had the turmoil in the chain-locker ceased when a native "kayak" pulled up alongside and a scarlet-jacketed man in a white wide-brimmed felt hat clambered up the makeshift companionway and onto the deck. A burst of greetings descended upon him from the ship's company which had gathered at the rail to meet him.

"Vell, Sergeant," the big man called Skipper Borgstrum bellowed, "how de devil you be?"

"Hello, Borgey," the newcomer cried extending a hand. "It's fine to see your ugly face again. But what're you doing up here so late?—ye'll be frozen tight."

"Bringin' you up some mutts, among odder t'ings," the skipper replied, jerking his head toward the pen. "Dough de main chebb is to bring in a last cargo of trade chunk for de Company."

"The devil you say," the sergeant exclaimed in surprise. "I thought they'd send the dogs overland."

"Quvicker, dis way und safes 'em," the skipper observed, "und dey tole me dat de transfer papers for de dogs come oberlandt from Dawson. Guess they don't trust old Borgey mit 'em," he added with a sniff.

"It's just the regulation, Borgey," the sergeant assured him quickly, "when papers or something gets lost, they want somebody handy to be the goat, and you're a civvy."

"Ay s'pose," the skipper grunted dryly. The sergeant laughed.

"But look here, Borgey," the red-coat said suddenly, "there's a new man in your crew. Present me, blast you, before I take a poke at you."

While the men talked and laughed and swapped news, Skag watched the newcomer warily. His first impression of the man was favorable, he wore the same jacket and hat as the men at Dawson, and his yellow-striped black legs ended in the same high knee-boots. But Skag wanted to know more, for Skag was a true judge of men, and could tell a good, a bad or a careless master at sight. Thus far, the man called Sergeant had seemed the soul of good nature, but Skag knew that men ofttimes acted parts, and he wanted to make certain.

When a goodly amount of the hail-fellow-well-met had been gotten over with, the group turned to the dog pen. Pushing back his wide hat and propping his hands on his hips, the man called Sergeant walked slowly toward the coop, followed by the skipper and a few of the ship's officers, the crew leaving to man the hatches and get the Company's goods up out of the hold before they should be caught by the freeze-up and wedged in for the entire season.

The rest of the dogs had now come to life. Even they, brainless, overgrown pups that most of them were, realized that something was going to happen, though it had taken a score of glances and chirps their way to make them see it. Now the lazy pen was transformed into a bedlam of whining growls and yelps, and the malamutes bumping into one another in a frenzied, aimless back-and-forth patrol of the cage's side.

"Any bad actors, Borgey?" the sergeant asked, spreading his legs and folding his arms to study the milling bundles of gray fur. "It's best to know beforehand."

"Not a vun, sergeant," the skipper shook his head. "Go right in mit 'em."

"It's funny," the red-coat said to the skipper, "a transfer of animals in this outfit always means a shifting of bucking bronchos or cut-throat dogs." The skipper grunted knowingly.

"Dot's how dey get shook of de bum ones, hey?"

"Sure is," the sergeant nodded. "Well, I suppose they had no bad ones handy or I'd sure have got 'em."

The sergeant went into the cage and closed the slat-and-wire door behind him. Immediately he was surrounded by six active malamutes who proceeded to administer a thorough and vigorous smelling, and not many seconds elapsed before the sergeant's immaculate black breeches had practically faded gray with dog-hair.

"Well, you're a friendly bunch," the sergeant finally spoke, rumpling as many sniffling heads as forced themselves under his hands. "Most of 'em pups," he told the skipper who now stood alone outside the pen watching the get-together in the dog-smelly enclosure.

SKAG had stood off in a far corner to watch. He had always showed the men at Dawson a quiet, steadfast sort of respect, and he now saw no particular reason for changing his ways. It was quite all right for the younger dogs to scramble and wriggle all over the newcomer, the same as they had done to all the men back at Dawson—but he, well, he was different, he was a lead-dog, and an old-timer at that. Possibly he'd been the same way in his puppyhood, but that was a long time back and he didn't remember.

In the last analysis Skag was just a wee bit arrogant.

"Well, laddie buck," the sergeant called softly to Skag after looking over at him for fully a minute, "what's wrong with you?" Skag made no movement nor showed that he knew he was being spoken to. After looking intently at him for another moment, the sergeant turned to the skipper and nodded a wink. "There's the gold brick of the bunch, Borgey. Dead as a doornail."

"You know, Borgey," he added philosophically, rising from where he had squatted amongst the dogs, "when one police division sends seven good dogs out of seven to another division, there's something rotten in your native land. Don't forget that."

The skipper scratched his head thoughtfully.

"Vell, he is a pretty old fella—eats by himself and everyt'ing, but he must be a good scrapper, all de rest leaf him alone."

"Well, it's a good percentage after all—six good ones out of seven," the sergeant agreed. "Just the same, we'll knock some life into the old beggar this winter. Pile of work this year, census down in the Coronation."

"Vell, now dot you've seen 'em," the skipper broke in, "come below und git de finest meal you ever clapped eyes on. Und' between friends," he added in an undertone, "I've got a bottle of de greatest schnapps that effer happened. Come down."

Skag lay still in his corner long after the men had gone below. He was uneasy. A premonition of something wrong was stirring within him. Somewhere, something was not just right. Back at Dawson he was ever the center of a discussion; and it always ended with some of the men coming over to pat his head and tell him what a fine old trail dog he was. When a civilian called to see the superintendent, he was always brought around and presented and told to lie down while his exemplary record was recounted. Then the visitor would say, "marvelous," "astounding," and other strange things and make a great fuss over him. But, though he could never know what it was the sergeant had said, he knew that this new master did not stand in awe of him, did not have any particular regard for him, and—he even began to fear—did not like him.

It was all strange and unfathomable, and Skag reached out his great head between two big paws to ponder the problem.

Late that afternoon, the sergeant and the skipper emerged from below-decks. Both were in better spirits and more openly joyful than Skag had ever seen any of the men at Dawson—though he did remember when a Dawson man had come back to the barrack holding the elbow and wrist of a civilian who had felt as these two did.

The sergeant stood in the doorway looking absently toward the pen, and the skipper hurried away to where the small boats, now loaded with the company's goods, were being swung out on the davits. He returned presently accompanied by several of the seamen, and the whole party advanced on the pen.

It proved a trying job, getting the stupid, fear-struck animals out into the open boat, particularly when it came to hoisting them from the rail up to the man in the boat who stood, arms reaching down, to receive them. Skag was the last to be boosted up, and the seaman who lifted him declared him heavier than the heaviest load of bricks that ever came out of a kiln. To which observation the sergeant replied that Skag would be well trained-down before the winter had passed. But, after a gruelling series of squeals and yelps, barks and kicks, bites and clouts with belaying pins, the whole swirling mass of gray and white hair was lowered to the water's edge, a half dozen men holding the would-be swimmers and fighters, in all, the most tumultuous boatload of life that ever settled into the Polar Sea.

Making fast the sergeant's "kayak," the man in the stern drew the sputtering twin-cylinder "outboard" and the party headed for shore.

Waiting for them on the moss-covered, rocky beach were five policemen, all of them the types whom Skag had known back at Dawson.

"Well, Sarj," one of them called before the boat had bumped ashore, "how are they?"

"Six fair-to-decent pups and one useless, old dub," the sergeant replied, casting a line to the man. "Pull 'er in, Bax, I don't want to get these boots soaked."

And so Skag became part of the equipment of Fairwell Island detachment of the police, with a character handed him gratis and the same treatment meted him as the score of strange mixed-breeds with whom he and his six fellow voyagers were cast.

Before Skag had properly gotten his bearings, the great snows came and the Polar winter took hold. The world about him became a glaring, crystal-white expanse, domed in by a watery sky and cold, blinding snow that flashed down on the pinnacled sea-ice and back into his eyes. And a biting tang blew through the air and rose up from the glittering snow-crust, and it burnt Skag's nose and feet and kindled within him a desire for exertion. It called him to the sledge.

SINCE the day of his arrival, the detachment quarters had been alive with preparations for the long census patrol into the Coronation Gulf far off to the eastward. The trip out would, even with smooth going, take the whole of the winter, which meant that great stores of rations, ammunition and equipment must be prepared. Already the Eskimo employes were hard at work, the women sewing the caribou clothing—police winter uniform being useless in the Arctic cold—and the men rebracing and binding with raw-hide the trusses of the three sledges.

The policemen too were hard at it, checking loads of dog-feed, pemmican, ship biscuit, compressed tea, condensed milk, alochol, oil, sugar and salt, testing boxes of the Lee-Enfield .303 ammunition, and shells for the shotguns which would be used when they got down into the Gulf; and preparing the forms for the long, tedious work of census taking among the natives.

While all this bustle of preparation was under way, Skag had nothing to do but bask in the wintry sun and run down along the beach and out onto the sea-ice. But he found no enjoyment in the enforced idleness, he wanted to be up and going. Long before this the men at Dawson would have had him harnessed and running up to the Forty Mile, out onto the Pelly or down over the Chilcoot. But, anxious though he was, and impatient at the delay, Skag knew as well as the men at the detachment that the sea-ice was not yet dense enough to bear the weight of their heavily loaded sledges. His experience had all been with rivers, but

[*Continued on page 157*]

Out-Guessing Wild Animals That Think

Mountain lions, coyotes, grizzlies, wolves and bobcats are the crafty four-footed outlaws that prey on the livestock of Western ranges. How Uncle Sam's professional hunters match their skill against extraordinary animal cunning

by Arthur Hawthorne Carhart

DO ANIMALS think? Scientists who study them under laboratory conditions say no, but veteran hunters who spend day after day in pursuit of notorious killers tell their stories and ask you to judge for yourself. No mythical animal legend compares in interest with the true story of Three Toes, for instance, the she-wolf that terrorized a countryside, mated with a collie, rescued her whelps from certain destruction, and not only eluded but defied all her pursuers until long months of patient tracking led her into a trap.

FACING the snarling rage of cornered cattle-killers, threatened by the leaping bolts of lightning that play about the high peaks, and driving their hard-bitten ponies through the peril of blizzard or mountain rainstorm, is a band of men who trail to their death the Western cattle thieves of today. While the West was still the Great Frontier the grim sheriff's posses which hunted down the rustlers and horse thieves of old had only the cunning of man to deal with. The fight is still on, but in another field. The men who ride the range after cattle killers today must match their wits against a cunning no two-legged desperado of pioneer times possessed. They must outwit the crafty trickery of the slyest outlaws in the animal kingdom—the four-legged predatory stock killers.

Mountain lions, bobcats, grizzlies, wolves, coyotes, and other killers slaughtered between twenty and thirty million dollars' worth of livestock last year on the Western ranges. That is why the government maintains a band of men, pioneers at heart, who concentrate every effort night and day, on their extermination. These men belong to the Predatory Animal Division of the Biological Survey, and the stories they tell in monosyllables sound like old medieval tales of were-wolves and ghost-tigers. Do animals think? Listen to their experiences with some of these four-legged desperados.

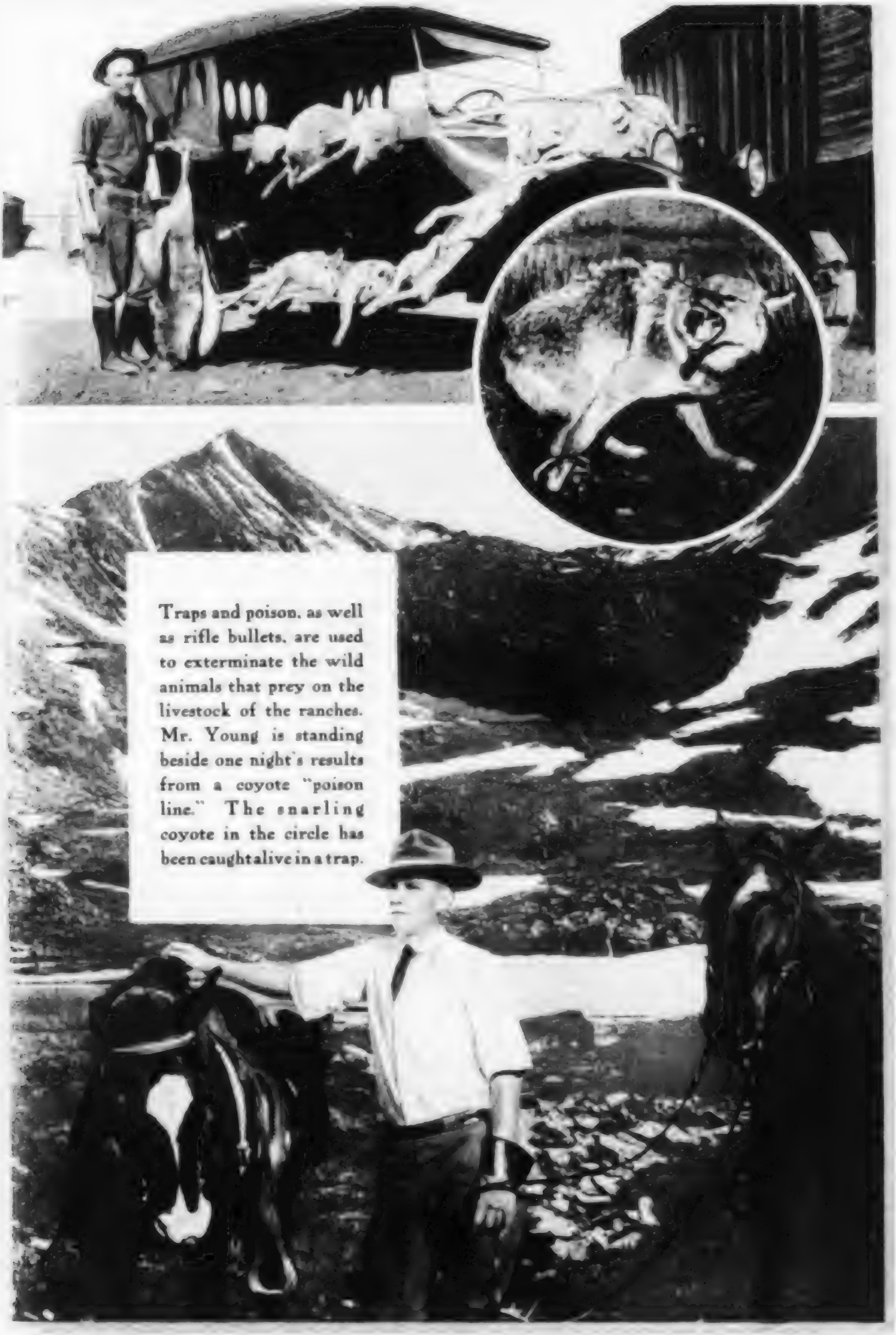
Stanley P. Young is the boss trailer of the hunters on Colorado's stock ranges, with the professorial title of Junior Biologist. His men have shot, strangled, trapped and poisoned uncounted thousands of predatory killers. His first-hand knowledge covers a rogues' gallery of animal personalities as startling and distinct as Billy the Kid, Jesse James, or Wild Bill Hickok. In dealing with animal criminals, he and his men must know the workings of the malefactors' minds just as intimately as the chief of a Detective Bureau should know the thinking processes of human outlaws.

It was as natural for Stanley P. Young to enter the Predatory Animal Division of the Biological Survey as it is for a duck to swim. Raised around a former frontier trading post of the old Northwest, he was brought up on the bygone traditions of the early fur trade. His pocket money was secured by trapping the smaller fur-bearing animals from the time he could be trusted out in the open. His father, the late Hon. Benjamin Young was a pioneer salmon packer. Stanley, the youngest of the family, was born in Astoria, Oregon about the high tide of the Klondike Gold Rush. From the very beginning all his interests pointed toward a life in the open.

High school and then a degree at Oregon University were followed by three years in British Columbia. Then he decided that he must have further instruction in the sciences pertaining to the out-of-doors. Entering Michigan University he received in 1915 a degree in Biology and Geology.

It was this same year that the predatory animal work of the Survey was organized. Stanley Young joined the Survey at once, not as a

(*Continued on page 153*)



Traps and poison, as well as rifle bullets, are used to exterminate the wild animals that prey on the livestock of the ranches. Mr. Young is standing beside one night's results from a coyote "poison line." The snarling coyote in the circle has been caught alive in a trap.

Stanley P. Young, of Denver, Colorado, directs a score or more professional hunters employed by the Predatory Animal Division of Uncle Sam's Biological Survey. The war they are constantly waging against beasts of prey saves millions of dollars for stock raisers of the state.

Sam Wood (left) is the "professor" in charge of the first class of students at the Paramount Picture School. In the oval above he is directing a practice scene before the camera

Pupils: Jake Luden, William Dillon, Marian Ivy Harris, Mona Palma, Harriet Krauth, Ethelda Kenvin, Irving Hartley, Charles Rogers, Loraine Eason, LaVerne Lindsay, Josephine Dunn, Dorothy Nourse, Thelma Todd, Charles Brokaw, Claud Buchanan, Robert Andrews, Greg Blackton, Walter Goss.

Training Tomorrow's Screen Stars

In the first school of its kind, sixteen hand-picked students from thirty thousand applicants for movie honors go through a rigorous course of training in the technique of motion-picture acting

by W. Adolphe Roberts

WHAT a young movie actor ought to know was put up to Sam Wood, director of the first cinema college. Entrance requirements are the hardest imaginable. Once in, the lucky candidates for diplomas are taught swimming, riding, and general calisthenics. The eight girls take æsthetic dancing, while as many boys are receiving instruction in boxing and fencing. In other classes they learn the art of pantomime, how to use make-up, and how to carry themselves gracefully. At intervals they attend lectures by experts on etiquette, applied psychology, photography, lighting, and all the technical details of general stage business.

SHE clung to the resolute-faced boy desperately and gazed about the mean lodging house with an expression of frozen horror. This tall stately brunette with a face like a Roman empress, contrasted oddly with the boy who might have come directly from a Kansas wheat field. He stared fixedly over her shoulder at the man who confronted them. This man, crouched as if ready to spring, hands on knees, watched them through narrowed eyes and growled viciously: "Do you want to fight? Then show that you're ready. Keep your chin up—up and out! Tell it in action."

To the girl he commanded. "Hang on to him tighter, Miss Krauth! Hunch your right shoulder! Act scared, if you want to get it across. Remember the camera has no ears!" The man was Sam Wood, old-time motion picture director. The lodging house room was built of lath and canvas theatrical props. The boy and the girl were students doing class work in the first school to be established anywhere in the world to train performers for the screen. The place was a great motion picture studio, and two cameras, trained upon them from different angles, ground away monotonously.

The episode upon which I had stumbled might have occurred at any stage of the making of a commercial movie. It was far more fascinating, however, than similar scenes to be seen in the big movie sets around them. For the players that day were acting, not for the public who would never see their pictures being ground out so carefully, but for themselves—and Sam Wood. He has handled the big stars like Charlie Chaplin—he filmed several of Charlie's early comedies—and he put Gloria Swanson through her paces in eight consecutive movies. But it looks as if he were getting far more "kick" out of his present job. When you hear about the youngsters he is working with and the fascinating possibilities of what he is doing with them, you will realize why.

Wood is a man somewhat above medium height, with shrewd eyes and a weather-beaten face verging on swarthy red. There certainly is nothing academic about him. He snaps out his orders decisively and he gets immediate results. Yet he shows unlimited patience in explaining knotty technical points to each student and is quick to praise even trivial signs of improvement in anyone's work. That is one of the reasons he is running this school. Throughout his professional career as director he has always had a definite flair for breaking in young stars. Gloria Swanson cheerfully admits that she would scarcely have won fame so rapidly if she had not had Wood as her first director. And Wood has always preached the necessity for a real motion picture school.

The millions who enjoy the movies have probably never realized that not one of the actors in that world of shadows—the screen, has been systematically schooled in the practice of his art. All of them have merely picked up what they know. The really brilliant stars have developed themselves by means of intuition and their powers of observation. The more commonplace ones have acquired technique of a sort from the disjointed orders of a haphazard succession of directors. There were no traditions and no clearing house for talent.

For the movies are a forced growth among the arts. On the grand scale with which we are now so familiar, they are barely fifteen years old, and the players have been taken from the legitimate stage or recruited frankly as amateurs. Some youngster who had never before worked at anything, but who happened to photograph well, has often been given a rôle which, in a few months, has been famous around the world. And yet, despite the eagerness of at least ten per cent. of America's total population to get into the movies, available candidates for star material have been rare.

That is the reason for the school which has been functioning since the summer of 1925 at the Paramount Studio in Astoria, just outside New York City. The first class has just been graduated. Sam Wood has not only taught his sixteen pupils the rudiments of movie art, but has brought them up to the point of making a complete picture worth showing commercially.

It was exhibited as the main feature of their graduation exercises. These pupils include a former shop girl, an artist's model and a young newspaper reporter. The sixteen come from all over the United States and back of every one of them lies a fascinating human story, as you will see.

They Hunt for Live Wires

First let us tell the tale of how the school came into being and how the sixteen students were collected. Big men in the motion picture business had long felt that a way must be found to recruit youngsters with real talent and start them off right. Finally Jesse L. Lasky, the First Vice-President in charge of production of the Famous Players-Lasky company, decided to do something about it. Sam Wood was the obvious man to make "Professor" of such a school. Lasky authorized him to train young actors and actresses at a cost for the first term of two hundred thousand dollars. Then he evolved an ingenious system for seclecting the right kind of aspirants.

By means of newspaper advertisements, announcements in theaters, and word of mouth publicity, girls between sixteen and twenty-five years old, and boys between eighteen and thirty, were invited to submit their photographs and brief physical descriptions of themselves to the nearest of the company's principal exchanges for the distribution of films. There are thirty of these scattered all over the United States. The manager of each exchange was instructed to select five candidates, making one-hundred and fifty in all. From these, seventy-five were to be chosen from their photographs, for screen tests. Camera operators were to be sent to ten centers for the purpose of making the screen tests. Forty survivors were to come to New York at their own expense to be interviewed by Mr. Lasky, and twenty finally selected as members of the class.

A special agreement, reached later, permitted a Boston newspaper to hold a contest and award scholarships to two pupils from New England. The school charged a tuition fee of five hundred dollars, so this scholarship idea was of concrete value to poor aspirants. More will probably be heard of it in connection with future classes.

There were thirty thousand applications to the branch office of Famous Players-Lasky, and more than twelve thousand entered the Boston newspaper's contest. But it is interesting to find that only nineteen out of this huge number were able to meet all requirements, that of these only five were chosen strictly according to the original rules and three were dropped from the school at the end of a month. Sixteen pupils remained, eight girls and eight boys. Let us meet a few of them, and get a notion of what qualities it took to emerge in their romantic gamble for a movie career.

Charles Rogers was a junior in the University of Kansas, studying journalism. He was a good amateur musician, who had toured eleven states with a Chautauqua band, playing the trombone and drums, and singing solos. In order to enter the contest, he turned down an offer to go on a Mediterranean cruise as a member of the orchestra of a liner. His photographs were submitted in the regular way. No pull was used in his behalf. It was his luck to have features that were highly photogenic. He was chosen unanimously over more than a thousand competitors in his district.

The case of Marian Ivy Harris, of Atlanta, Georgia, offers a piquante variation. She was taking lessons in drawing, hadn't given any thought to motion pictures, and did not propose to try for the Famous Players school. But she had a boy friend, a newspaper chap, who thought her peerless among brunette beauties. He talked her into entering at the last minute and she was one of the fifteen selected from Georgia for screen tests. She won the finals and is now an enthusiast.

Josephine Dunn's experience was even more remarkable. This pretty blonde show girl owes her start to two separate chance happenings. When she was fifteen she accompanied a friend who was going for a try-out in connection with a musical comedy engagement. The stage director noticed Miss Dunn sitting in the dark theater, coaxed her into singing and dancing for him, and ended by hiring her and rejecting her friend. Last summer, Miss

From blackboard to silver screen was an easy transition for Thelma Todd, a New England schoolmarm from Lawrence, Mass. She is the rare type of blonde that passes every camera test, including the exacting one of the man in the seat out front.

Kansas supplies two promising candidates in Iris Gray and Charles Rogers. The close-up reveals Miss Gray's qualifications for baby vamp parts. In the scene above she is playing the disdainful flapper to young Mr. Rogers's bashful country boy.

Dunn, who was playing in "Kid Boots," went to see her cousin take a screen test for the movie school. The make-up man persuaded her to be tested, too. She was again successful, while the cousin was not.

Hers, by the way, was one of the cases in which the original rules for entering the school were waived. She submitted no preliminary photographs. The company had discovered by that time that it could not get a full class from among the competitors, because so few had faces which would survive the ordeal of the camera. Later, two models, Thelda Kenvin and Mona Palma, and a dancer, Iris Gray, were invited to enter, as were Robert Andrews, who had had a little experience himself as an assistant motion picture director, and Walter Goss, a reporter on the New York *Herald-Tribune*.

The winners of the Boston newspaper contest were Harriet Krauth and Dorothy Nourse. Miss Krauth was born in Port of Spain, Trinidad. She had belonged to an amateur company called the "Little Screen Players," of Boston, and had been leading woman in a two-reel comedy filmed by the club. Her profile is striking, with a line from forehead to chin that suggests a Roman coin. Miss Nourse was working in a Boston department store when she was notified that one of the scholarships had gone to her. Also from Massachusetts—from Lawrence, is Thelma Todd, a blonde school teacher who applied through a local office of the Famous Players in accordance with the plan outlined in the beginning of the contest.

The first time I hunted up the students at the Paramount Studio, they had been at work for only a few days, and I was told that they were extremely shy. The space allotted to them in the middle of a stage the size of half a city block had been enclosed with a wall of canvas stretched on a wooden frame. Visitors were discouraged. However, I was allowed to sit for a minute or two just beyond the entrance.

I got a fleeting impression of astonishingly pretty girls. Beauty, of course, had been for them a prime requisite in passing the tests. The boys seemed husky, clean-cut, like college athletes. The whole class was dressed in Eighteenth Century costumes and was rehearsing the simplest sort of lesson in deportment. How to enter and leave a room, how to give and receive salutations, how to manage swords and flounces: such were their problems in this first contact with silent drama.

Two months later, I returned. The school was still fenced in, but the atmosphere of embarrassment was no more. I was given a glimpse of zestful young people doing "bits," as they call them, before the camera, competing to see who could win the director's praise. One girl demonstrated the naturalness with which she could topple fainting to the floor. Fifty little technical specialties had been developed.

How the Students Work

For instance, Charles Rogers, the former University of Kansas junior had learned to capitalize his Middle-Western background, and was already a competent character actor in "rube" parts. It was on this occasion that I heard Wood coaching him and Miss Krauth in the scene described at the beginning of this article. Dorothy Nourse showed that she could get mad-cap comedy effects, somewhat in the manner of Constance Talmadge, though the director took care to warn her that she must develop her own technical specialities and not imitate any well known star.

When I made my final visit, a few weeks before graduation, the canvas walls were down. The class was operating on a regular motion picture "set." In this case it was the hall and stairway of a lodging house, built of flimsy boards and open on two sides, but realistically finished as to all the details that would come within the scope of the camera.

I spent the day with Sam Wood and his pupils—the Paramount Junior Stars they voted to call themselves, and the name has been adopted officially. It would be difficult to conceive of a more enlightening day for a lover of the movies.

"How did you start these kids?" I asked him.

"I set them to getting into perfect physical condition. Both girls and boys were taught swimming, horse-back riding and general calisthenics. The girls were also given æsthetic dancing, and the boys fencing and boxing. These exercises are part of the course, and will be continued till the end.

"As an important factor in physical training, the students are required to keep regular hours. They are quartered in hotels in New York City, chosen by the company. They must be in bed by 10:30 every evening, except once a week when they may stay out until about two o'clock. The boys have been placed upon their honor to observe the rules. The girls are in charge of a chaperone, Mrs. F. Walter Taylor, the widow of a celebrated painter.

"With athletics well under way, the next steps were to teach the students how to use theatrical make-up, how to carry their bodies gracefully on the stage, how to express themselves in pantomime. At fixed intervals, they were required to attend lectures on etiquette, on applied psychology, on the technical aspects of producing motion pictures. Under this last head, for instance, lighting and photography have been thoroughly explained to them. They're already wiser than the average movie actor, who knows nothing about the camera.

"This business of registering a wordless story, wordless emotions, for the screen, is a different problem from anything in the technique of the other arts. It's miles removed from the acting you see in a Broadway show. It's not even straight pantomiming, as practiced in the flesh before an audience. Remember, the characters in a movie are people who are supposed often to be talking to one another. Gestures must be used to clarify the meaning of the words we cannot hear. These gestures have to be subtle, yet more intelligible than the Indian sign language.

"We flash important speeches on the screen. We call them subtitles. But the player must be shown making the speech. His lips must frame the actual words, otherwise he does not carry conviction. In many instances, his facial expression and the subtitle are not enough.

"The hero makes a significant remark about a wrist-watch the villain is wearing, let us say. A wrist-watch is a small object. The meaning of the remark would be lost—subtitle or no subtitle—if he did not look straight at the watch and either gesture toward it or tap it with his finger. The audience must first know that he was talking about the watch, then the subtitle comes along and tells what he said.

"That's the sort of thing I drill into my students. I'm never weary of reminding them that the camera has no ears."

On the heels of this axiom, Wood led the way to the studio's private theater, and ordered projected on to the screen some twenty versions of a single brief episode. A boy and a girl were shown creeping along the landing of the lodging-house "set" already mentioned. As they reach the foot of the stairs, a fellow-lodger opens her door, gives the alarm and they are surrounded by inquisitive gossips. The couple explain, on a humorous note, that they have just been married.

Each of the versions comprised a new combination of students. Each girl had her chance at playing the heroine and some girls had two chances, paired with different men. It was amazing to note the variety of effects

There are all kinds of ways for breaking into the pictures. Josephine Dunn went to see her cousin take a screen test and was persuaded to take one, too. She was successful; the cousin was not. Walter Goss was a newspaper reporter who likewise took the test by invitation. Marian Ivy Harris was an art student in Atlanta and entered the contest only at the last minute to please a friend. Greg Blackton's photograph brought an invitation to come on from South America.

obtained. Walter Goss, when it was his and Iris Gray's turn to play the lovers, worked up a note of comedy in a way that won the director's praise. While the gossips chattered, Goss reached behind his back, captured the girl's hand, twisted around a seal ring she wore until only the plain metal band was visible, and then triumphantly exhibited the hand. The idea was to make the crowd think that Iris had on a wedding ring. It was sure-fire stuff for a laugh, and it earned one, even there.

The mobile facial expressions of another boy stressed a sterner note when he was arguing with the neighbors. Yet, he, too had just shown he could be funny. He had walked into the picture in stockinged feet, his shoes dangling absurdly from finger and thumb.

In his rôle of teacher, Sam Wood talked straight to the students present while the film was running. He was equally frank in saying whether he thought the succeeding bits of action good or bad. He called attention to such minute details as a handkerchief which protruded too far from a boy's coat pocket, a smear of white on a hat. "If you were professionals, oversights like those might cost you your job," he remarked. Then, when the reel ended, he remarked:

"I consider these classroom demonstrations about the most valuable feature of the course. The practice work of the students reaches the screen in a few hours. This enables them to correct their faults, and to improve along the lines in which they show promise.

"The hit-or-miss movie actor, who breaks into the game as an extra, gets no chance to see his work until months later when the picture is shown in a theater. Often, he never sees it, because the scene in which he figured may have been deleted in the cutting room.

"And here's another advantage my kids could enjoy only in a school: Byron Morgan, one of the best known scenario writers in the business, has been on duty with the class for weeks, for the purpose of constructing a plot in which each of the sixteen pupils will have an appropriate part. He has observed their physical types and their emotional gifts. He has written a story which we are making into a motion picture fully as elaborate as any issued with the hall-mark of some popular star's name. It will be exhibited by a chain of first-run theaters, assuring the students immediate contact with the public.

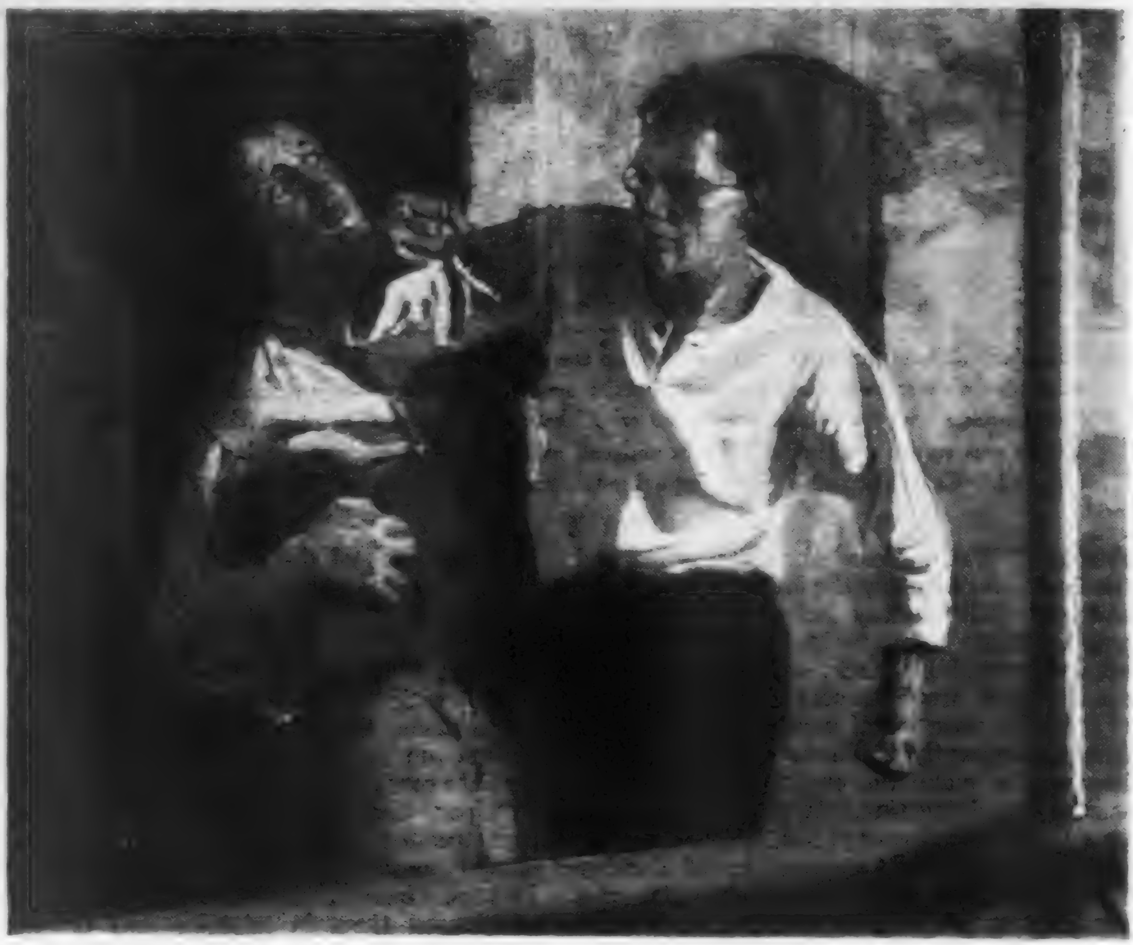
"Upon their showing in this picture will turn the decision as to which ones are to be offered professional contracts by Famous Players. Bear in mind that the company has not bound them in advance, has taken no option on their services. They can refuse to work for us, if they wish. But the company has undertaken to give them an artistic education and will bid for the services of the more promising. The others will leave the school equipped to compete for engagements in the open market. They should have little trouble in finding them. Right now, all of these students are already more competent to play at least minor rôles than are most of the extras who wait in line for jobs at the big studios."

No Swelled Heads Here

"Sixteen girls and boys—winning out over perhaps forty-five thousand contestants—graduating as the first class of junior stars on record—their way smoothed for success in a game that millions think more glamorous than any other—haven't their heads been turned just a little bit by their luck?" I asked.

"On the contrary, they're remarkably modest," replied Wood earnestly. "I've tried to give them the psychology of students, and not that of Fame and Fortune Contest winners. I think I've turned the trick."

Before I said good-by, I was compelled to agree wholly with him. Keeping the sixteen level-headed has been, by and large, Sam Wood's most signal triumph as movie director metamorphosed into Professor of the Art of Motion Picture Acting.



He rushed back for Oliver. In good time, too, for a figure was just emerging from the stateroom with the

The Pink

By
Eugene P. Lyle, Jr.

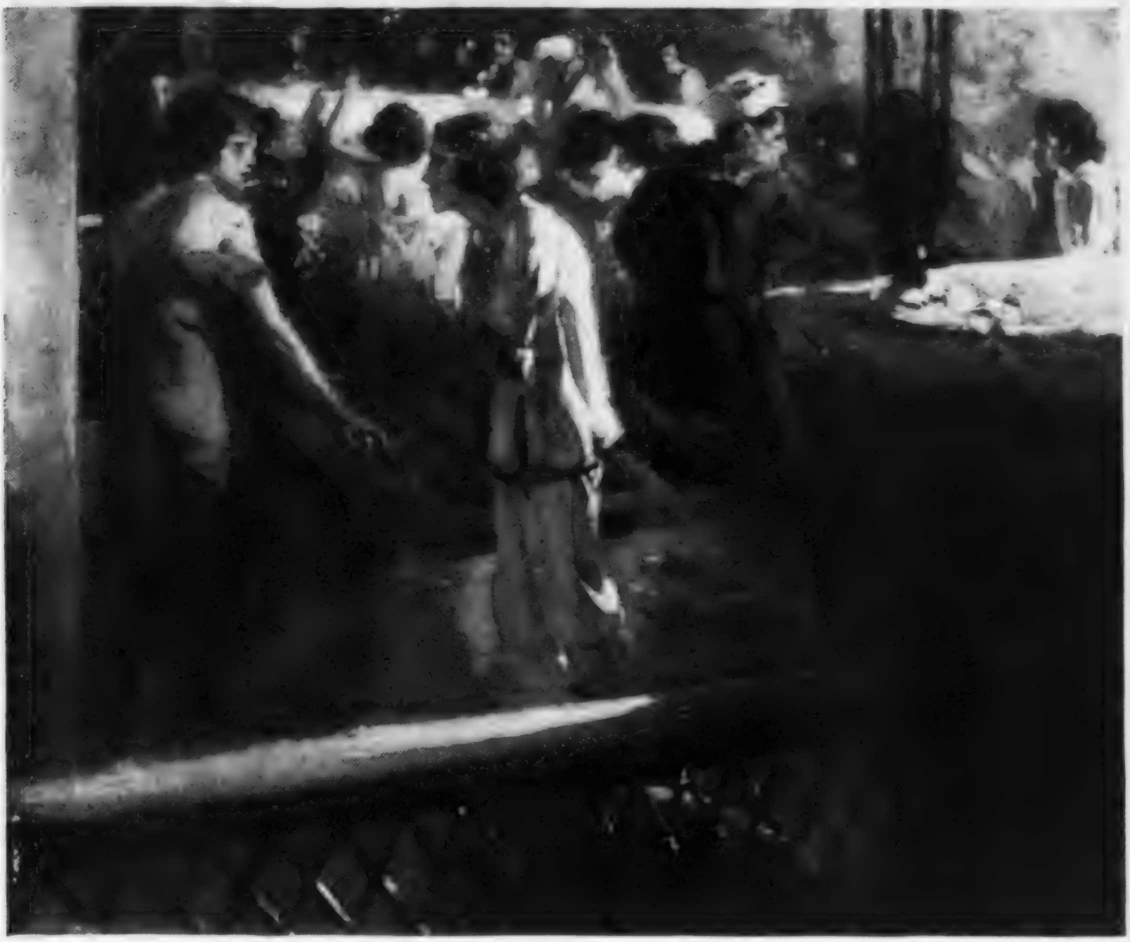
Seven baby screen stars make it

THIS narrative started in to be an account of the Nolan ant spray, its invention, etc., which might be of interest to the trade regarding this standard insecticide; but the pink alligator wiggled in, and, as they say in the movies, stole the story.

Jim Nolan returned home here at Sunset Harbor from up at Leland Stanford with a six or seven thousand dollar education and took a job in Doc Jedlicke's drug-store at thirty-two-fifty a week. He had majored in chemistry, but gradually with the disintegration of shoe leather came to the conclusion that there was no violent need of chemists just at present. So he wiped the dust off his spectacles and stayed to roll pills into a meal ticket.

One day in spring after the rains, when some little school girls popped in at recess for an orgy of penny spending, Jim noticed a convocation of small dark brown ants in the candy show-case. He took this seriously. Though he was not an entomologist, the curiosity of a scientist started him to wondering how the multitudinous little congregators got their information about the chocolate drops. They couldn't have looked. They couldn't have listened. The information must have come by way of their little smellers. Astounding foragers, by grab!

"Fix 'em with Biff," Doc Jedlicke broke upon



box. "Well, Mr. Claxton," said Jim, with a somewhat brusk jolt to the chin, "nice evening for a fire."

Alligator

Illustrated by
Stockton Mulford

hot for the boy with the camera

his reverie. He pointed to the widely exploited ant powder, next the tooth pastes. "Sprinkle it on their trail."

"Tail?" asked Jim, still dreamy.

"Trail!" shouted Doc.

Next day, ants still present.

"What's matter?" demanded Doc. "Ain't the stuff any good?"

"Oh, yes," said Jim judicially. "I stepped on some of the ants, sprinkling it around."

Doc Jedlicke put his hands over his ears and turned away. He had learned that this involved less mental strain than trying to puzzle out Jim Nolan's talk sometimes, especially when Jim was beaming at him affectionately from behind his spectacles.

At home there was further tribulation. Ants in sugar-bowl, bread-box, butter cooler, sirup-pitcher. You just about had to eat them, or not eat, announced Jim's mother. Jim took this seriously. Perhaps he had been mistaken. There was violent need of a chemist—to do something about ants. He cluttered up the prescription case with beakers, flasks, reagent bottles, test-tubes, litmus papers, graduates, pipettes, and the oblivious preoccupation of an earnest young bachelor of science. Never quite blowing up the shop he emerged after some days with a volatile compound which, when sprayed from the small pump his mother used on her roses, drove the ants exuberantly crazy. One whiff of the mist and they began racing round and round like a million cats having a fit.

"Ride 'em, cowboy!" yipped Ollie Ogden, Jim's old college chum, who had a ringside seat on the kitchen floor.

Faster and faster raced the ants in lessening circles, but abruptly they would stop short in the mad whirligig, flop over on their backs with legs in air, quite through.

"Ante up!" whooped Ollie Ogden, and that's the genesis of the now familiar trade name of the Nolan ant spray.

As yet, however, "Ante Up" was far from perfected. Jim's mother did not seem to care for dead ants in the butter much more than live ones. And more live ones kept coming. The quick and the dead together were rather too much. Jim decided to appeal to the ant's highly reputed intelligence. He had already noted its acute sense of smell, though whatever the organ of this sense, whether mouth, antennæ, glands in the head, or olfactory pores over the body, he did not need to know. He only knew that what his spray needed was an odor, musty and prophetic of death, which would warn them to keep away. Whereupon he started his memorable search for a smell.

It was a quest of patient thoroughness. He experimented with about every smell in the shop, and infinite combinations in infinitely varying proportions at varying temperatures. The rains came again, and spring, and the little ants in the chocolate drops. He had reduced the lethal power of his spray, and limited its function to that of odor carrier—when he should get his odor. And finally he got that, as is now well known, and finally got it down to the precise degree of strength. It was like tuning in on your radio. A little more of wave length, or a little less, and you get nothing. The technical story of Jim Nolan's adventures with smell would doubtless prove more absorbing than this little that can be told, but the formula and processes are a closely guarded secret, and one can only marvel at the result. There was the first demonstration in the drugstore. As a jet of the spray filled the air, the long ribbon-like processional column of ants all faced about and went marching back to their hill city. And a precautionary spray on the doorsill once or so a week kept them out.

"Beats Biff all holler," said Doc Jedlicke. "Jim, you write them fellers. Tell 'em what you got."

BUT the Biff people, Chicago, replied on a gaudy letterhead that nothing could vie with Biff, and to replace it with another preparation they could not consider, since to do so would entail the loss of their heavy investment in promotion and advertising which had made Biff a terror to ants.

"But ants don't read advertising. Their eyesight is poor," Jim objected learnedly to Doc.

He left the Biff people to stew in their own complacency while he played around with Ante Up. Where an occasional household was afflicted with ants exercising squatter sovereignty, and the householder happened in at Doc's inquiring for something to fix 'em, Jim beamed and reached for the little spray pump and sallied forth and fixed 'em. It was largely the scientific satisfaction of the thing for Jim, but Doc Jedlicke's benevolent commercialism intervened.

"You charge a fee or something, Jim. Guarantee for so much to rid the place of ants."

"So much per ant that keeps away," Jim suggested.

The afflicted were glad to pay, however, and gradually Jim waxed as busy as a doctor during the flu, answering calls farther and farther afield. Ranchers, especially those with orchards, began sending for him, and he used the spray at killing strength and smote the hill cities of the enemy. He came to realize as the saying goes, that he had something.

"Pshaw, we're getting off light compared to some other parts of the country," one of his grateful patients said to him. "They're these Argentine ants that got in by way of New Orleans and been spreading like an organized invasion. They sure are spreaders. Even got into the mattresses of some swell apartment houses back East, and it was the paying tenants who had to leave. And eaters—say! Fruit-trees, field crops, anything, even young chicks. And what's more, not being satisfied with their own meanness, they aid and abet certain other pests like the aphids—you know, plant lice, sap suckers. They milk these aphids for a sort of honey-dew, and carry 'em out to the tender twigs where they feed. They even build regular shelters over them."

"H'm," said Jim, "you take pretty good care of your cows, too, don't you?"

But he perceived the broadening possibilities. He learned that millions were being spent in the sugar cane and cotton belts to hold the little brown ant in check. Then out of a clear sky dropped a letter from the Biff people. They invited him to submit a sample of his spray with the formula. They wished to make tests and estimate manufacturing costs with a view to determining if they could make him a definite offer.

"Ye-ah, send 'em the whole works—just like that!" snorted Doc Jedlicke. "Not muchee, Jim. They're a cheesy bunch, and now that you're hurting them, they'd rob you blind."

Jim only wiped his glasses, though he said, "Are you awful set against getting rich, Doc?" and for once Doc did not stop up his ears. "For of course you'll be in on it. Block of stock, or what have I? Listen, I'm going to put this thing up to a real outfit," and he named none other than Chenault & Massey, Manufacturing Chemists. He pondered a moment. "A postage stamp is so piffling small!" he stated plaintively. "No, I'll go myself."

"To New York, Jim?"

"To William Street, New York, their home office."

"And I'm backing you," said Doc, "and I'll write these Biff burglars to thank 'em kindly and say you're making other arrangements."

Jim wanted to go by water, down by way of the Panama Canal and up again, though he had to wait two weeks for a boat; and while he was waiting Ollie Ogden asked him if he'd mind taking a pink alligator along with him. Jim knew, of course, that Ollie, who had been a reptile fan from babyhood, meant the alligator lizard, but why pink or why at all?

"Jim," said Ollie reverently, "it's an albino! Think of that—an albino lizard! I bagged him the last time I was out on the desert after rattlers. He's unspeakably unique, much too rare to trust to the express company, which shows how greatly I trust you, old fellow—"

"But why part with the darling at all?"

"I must. The curator of reptiles at the Bronx Zoo—"

"Why would he cure them?"

"Shut up! He agrees to trade our zoo a high-land mocassin, a garter, a king, and some other miscellany for my Oliver. Yes, that's his name, after me. You'll be terrifically careful of him, won't you, Jim?"

"Anybody'd think Oliver was your only child."

BUT Jim consented in the end, after being almost tearfully importuned. He stipulated, however, that Oliver's container, or housing en route, should disguise the contents, and Ollie complied by ripping out the mechanism of an old camera and preparing the leather-covered black box for his treasure's abode. To all appearance it was still a camera when Ollie brought it to the dock on the day of Jim's departure. He expected praise for the cunningly concealed air holes in the bottom and the tiny lock that had been countersunk in the wood for securing the slide at the back.

"Is the beast inside?" Jim asked.

"Yes, Oliver's inside," and Jim was allowed a peep, when the slide was pulled out a half inch, at the little creature inside. Hardly nine inches long it was, and with its short legs elbowed out, its tapering tail, and its jaws opening ferociously though quite harmlessly, it curiously resembled an alligator in miniature, but an alligator colored wrong, for it was of a creamy pink, its eyes minute beads like faded rubies.

"And I hope you won't be impatient with him," said Ollie, "like you were with Annette." Annette was Ollie's pet gopher snake at college who inhabited the waste basket, and one rainy afternoon she interrupted a poker game by spiraling up Jim Nolan's leg. "On the other hand," continued Ollie, "try not to get so attached to him that you won't want to give him up. Oh, I forgot. When you catch flies—"

"Catch flies?"

"Yes, for Oliver's dinner. You set the time exposure, so, which opens the shutter, and you pass his dinner into him."

"If that's all I pass into him—" began Jim darkly when another shadow of dismay crossed his face. "Girls!" he murmured. "Look!"

They were hanging over the ship's rail, draping and festooning the rail, merrily perched on the rail, silken legs swinging. Language waxes ornate, describing them. They were a cloud of butterflies, a dozen cream puffs, a galaxy of sunkist peaches. They were pretty as pictures, and were being made into pictures. On the dock a snappy stout youth in knickerbockers and linoleum-pattern hose was cranking a camera pointed up at them while they waved girly-girly flourishes of farewell to nobody in particular.

"Baby Stars!" Ollie ejaculated, waving back at them. He remembered about them from reading the morning paper. They weren't necessarily stars, or not yet, but they were going from Hollywood to New York under the auspices of a big releasing corporation, and with their own cameraman and press agent, for personal appearances in theaters showing pictures in which they were more or less prominently featured. "All those little queens for playmates—oh, you Jim! Any shiek would give his widest pants to be in your shoes."

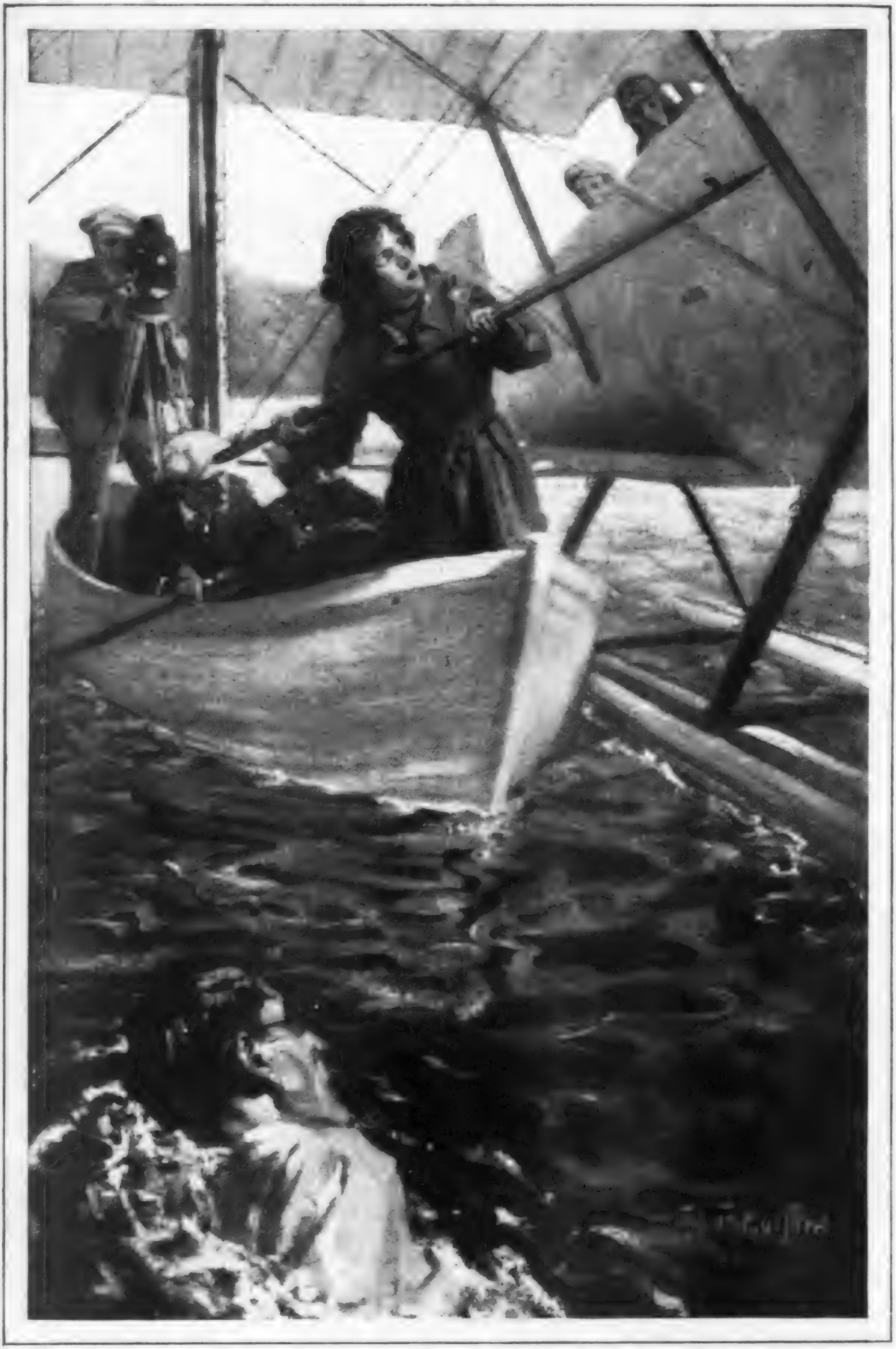
"Painted lips and pink alligators!" muttered Jim. "Some cozy afternoon on deck I'll turn Oliver loose among them and maybe they'll all jump overboard."

"You won't!" gasped Ollie, but the whistle blew and with one wrench of parting he surrendered the casket with its jewel into Jim's hands. "Promise me you'll keep him secret—take no chances of his being stolen."

"Fat chance!" grumbled Jim, following a Jap steward who carried his other luggage up the plank.

He had chosen an outside cabin on the upper deck, and an airy, long-legged individual who had likewise just come on board was being installed in the stateroom next his own. He was a jazzy and rather sardonic person with a hawkish nose and cocksure, patronizing eye, and his clothes, as the clothiers recommend this season, weren't the least bit afraid. He was standing in his doorway, pulling a checkered cap down tight on his wedge-shaped head, when Mr. Nolan and party—the reference being to Oliver—arrived.

"Ha, brother," the stranger greeted him,



The girl seized a boathook and brightly raked the hook end into the plane's vitals. The engine suddenly went dead doggie. "Thoughtful little scout," thought Jim as he struck out for the plane.

breezily patronizing, "so you're to be my neighbor, not so?"

Jim had no brothers. Still, he could be inaccurate also, so he said politely, "How do you do, Mr. Nolan?"

"Oh, I say," protested the man, "my name's Claxton. And I say, awful careful you're being of that camera, aren't you? Daresay it isn't really a camera."

"It's a polar-bear cage," Jim admitted, though slightly disturbed in his mind at Mr. Claxton's acuteness. "Why do you think it isn't a camera."

"Because, down on the dock there, you didn't use it to snap a picture of the Baby Stars. Any man would."

The cocksure eyes didn't miss much, evidently, and Jim closed the outer slatted door of his stateroom while he stowed away his luggage. The ship was clear of the pier and heading for the bottle-neck exit from the bay when he stepped out on deck again. A seaplane was circling overhead, but not with the approval of the Baby Stars. A cluster of them near Jim quivered with envy.

"That's Nancy Perkins in it," said the baby-blue-eyed one. "See her leaning over, waving down at us. Oh, oh, but if she isn't the publicity hound!"

"Don't tell me!" snipped a black-eyed siren. "That's why she missed the boat up at Sand Pedro when the rest of us got on.. Her trunks are on board, you bet. But you wait till she tells it."

"Ye-ah wait!" a hoydenish little trouper whipped in. "Accordin' to her scenario Lasky or somebody begs her on bended knee to wait and sign a contract, so she has to hire a plane ot catch up with us. Talk about camera pigs! Now she'll get a sequence all to herself in the news reel. Wha'd I tell you—look there!"

Jim looked too. The snappy stout cameraman had hoisted himself with camera and tripod to the roof of the deckhouse and was grinding zestfully away at the low swooping plane. And another brisk young man, the press agent of the voyaging Babes, had rushed up on the bridge and was gesticulating excitedly in an argument with the captain. The captain wearily nodded assent, and a moment later the screw churned foam, bringing the ship to a stop. As the plane passed overhead the girl in the cockpit showered an armful of roses down upon the captain, which impulsive little act, be sure, was caught by the camera. Jim, too, caught a glimpse of the girl's happy, laughing face and windblown curly chestnut hair.

WITHIN a hundred yards the plane alighted on the surface of the bay, and a small boat was lowered from the ship to meet it. The cameraman was setting up his camera in the bow of the small boat, and behind him the press agent was writing furiously, but why, Jim wondered, was that Jazzy long-legged Claxton going along too? Mildly curious, Jim watched. While the girl, trim and agile in aviator's leather, was tossing her handbag to a sailor and was herself following it into the small boat—all in the camera's eye, of course—he noticed that the man Claxton was dickering with the pilot of the plane, and, terms evidently being concluded, Claxton handed over a suitcase into the plane—and after that he climbed into the cockpit just vacated by the girl, carrying with him a black leather box, apparently a camera.

"Funny!" thought Jim, and he dashed into his stateroom. Surely enough, the supposed camera containing the pink alligator was gone. The man Claxton, suddenly and inexplicably abandoning his sea voyage to become a return passenger in the seaplane, had taken it. Jim was glad of it at first. Then he was mad. Not that he would grieve for Oliver, but the cool casualness of that fellow Claxton! "Hey!" he shouted, climbing the ship's rail, but Claxton in the floating plane seemed only to urge the pilot to get going. Jim used no more breath that way. He stripped off his coat, kicked off his low shoes, and dived into the warm waters of the bay. He gave the porpoises cards and spades, lashing out for the plane. He could see that Claxton had strapped himself to his seat and that the pilot was hurrying to take off. Jim would never have made it but for the girl. But the girl seized a boathook and brightly raked the hook end of it into the plane's vitals. The engine, which had burst into a deafening roar, suddenly went dead doggie.

"Thoughtful little scout!" thought Jim.

It was not for him, though, as he soon discovered when in a dozen strokes more he bobbed up between the small boat and the plane.

"Not another word," she was addressing the infuriated pilot. "No, I don't care if you have a passenger back, you will wait just the same. I've paid you to take a film back to Los Angeles with you for next week's news reel and likewise some copy for tomorrow morning's papers." She turned to the cameraman, who was passing a magazine of film over to the pilot. "Hope you got plenty of footage, Charlie." Then to the scribbling press agent, she said, "Take your time, Aleck, and make it good. The gentleman, I believe, has decided to wait."

"It'll be the lead," said Aleck while his pencil went racing. "Rest of my story already filed, but this . . . Oh, you burglar, hi-jacker, porch-climber, the way you've lifted the headlines from those beautiful dumb-bells!"

Jim, clinging to the gunwale, saw the girl's stormy brown eyes round demurely, and she almost cooed as she said:

"Well, Aleck, you know how it is. Not

being beautiful, I've got to use my brains to make up for having them."

Beautiful or not, thought Jim, she could take the part of an intelligent girl in the pictures, and make people believe it. And he wasn't sure but that she was beautiful, at that. But now, with nice deliberation, she was giving her attention to him as he pulled his dripping form over into the boat.

"Why the icy plunge?" she asked him. "Did you think we were working in a serial?"

"Fellow's got some of my luggage," said Jim. "Now Mr. Claxton—"

"Your luggage? Oh, I say!" But Mr. Claxton made no trouble at all. He manifested only debonair surprise to discover that the black box, a camera apparently, was not his own. How very stupid of him, in his hurry, to go bolting into the wrong cabin!

"I notice you got your own suitcase all right," Jim pointed out as he possessed himself of the box with Oliver inside.

"Jumping overboard for an old camera," observed the girl. "Must be extraordinarily priceless."

"Heirloom," Jim explained. "Generation to generation . . . . Oh, are you returning to the ship with us, Mr. Claxton?"

"Yes, quite," Mr. Claxton urbanely replied, climbing from the plane into the boat. "Decided on a sea voyage after all. And we'll still be neighbors, won't we?"

Jim could not understand these costly changes of mind. Claxton wasn't trying to steal merely an old, out-of-date camera. Did he suspect, or know, what was inside? Jim began to wonder if after all there was something in Ollie Ogden's raving about the awful pricelessness of pink alligators. Was Claxton perhaps on the trail of the pink alligator—agent for a rival zoo, or some circus or museum? It was a weird hypothesis, but then, you needed one to fit Mr. Claxton's weird conduct. Or perhaps he was a collector, and collectors stopped at nothing to possess a unique specimen in their line. Oliver was certainly growing bigger and bigger as a responsibility. Right willingly Jim would have presented the beast to Mr. Claxton, with his cordial regards, and here he had to guard it as he would his life, his honor, and catch flies for it.

"WHY are you always catching flies?" Miss Nancy Perkins, the girl of the aeroplane, asked him the second day out, pausing beside him in the lee of the funnel where he was at it.

She was in regular clothes, chiffons or something or other. She was downright girl-like, not doll-like, not siren-like, not duchess-like. She didn't run to type or pose. She was just natural, and so achieved difference. Shrewdly she had kept her own name, whereas, the names of most of the others were orchid-tinted and vanilla-flavored confections. Again she was different in noticing Jim. The Baby Stars naturally owned the ship, now called the Baby Farm, and ravaged all in it with their charms, but none bothered to stake a claim to the spectacled Jim in his studious and somewhat shy isolation unless, possibly, the different Miss Nancy was up to something of the sort with her naïve inquisitiveness about flies.

Jim had his alibi ready. He could not tell her that they were for Oliver's supper. He recoiled at the thought of anyone suspecting that he harbored a reptile for cabin mate. After his experience with Claxton he kept the door locked and the key in his pocket. He beamed gravely at Nancy Perkins.

"It's a test of nerves," he said, "to know when to stop drinking."

"But—you haven't started yet?"

"When I catch my last fly, believe me, then I will."

The girl sighed humorously. "You won't tell me, either, I suppose, about the inwardness of that antique camera that you go around jumping overboard after?"

He was finding evasion difficult before the quizzing friendly brown eyes. She was such an understanding sort of person, it occurred to him that it would be pleasant telling her things, but important things—about Argentine ants, for instance, and the ant spray, and how he hoped to interest the great Chenault & Massey, Manufacturing Chemists, in it. And before he quite knew it, he was in fact telling her these things, while keeping the pink alligator dark. And she understood, though perhaps mostly with the heart. Manufacturing chemists in his life were what picture producers were in hers. And when he talked about nation-wide distribution for his product, wasn't that the same as aspiring to a big releasing company that controlled a string of first-run theaters? Certainly she understood. Youth in a little wagon, and achievement the star—the two children sat on the front seat together.

Aleck, the publicity man, and Claxton promenaded by arm in arm, deeply conferring.

"Pretty thick, those two," Jim remarked.

"But not Aleck," said Nancy. "That lad is on the job always. He's cooking up something."

"With Claxton?"

"With anybody he can get an idea from, whenever for ten seconds running he hasn't a new one of his own. Yes, maybe an idea has sprouted on the Claxton bean pole, for it does look as though the harvest moon is shining for little Aleck."

Maybe so, maybe so. At any rate that very night the ship was lapped by flames.

How long after he had been lulled to sleep in his berth by his cradle song, as Jim called the low rhythmic grinding of the propeller shaft which for him was the Lullaby of Power, he did not know, but it was in the dead of night when a thump on his door brought him awake, and at once wide awake, for there was a queer glow in the room diffused through the slatted door and window, and the smell of burning chemicals in his nose. The glow rose and fell, as though clouded by billowing clouds of smoke.

"Huh—ship's on fire!" he grunted.

He hated the compulsion—having to get up. But he was already up, pulling on trousers, stuffing more clothes into his bag, and rushing out of there. The deck on his side was deserted—not a soul. But the glow was from pulsing flame mixed with dense smoke that rose above the deckhouse on the other side. He hurried round to that side. They were making ready to lower the boats. The ship's searchlight had been turned on them, and in the glare the frenzied drama of abandoning a burning vessel at sea was being enacted. Ship's officers were herding the Baby Stars over the rail into the boats. The girls might have been lovely models of a fashion show stampeded out of their dressing rooms too soon—quite a bit too soon.

One of the sailors seized Jim's arm. "You next, sir!"

"No, wait—" He remembered Oliver. Nothing, it seemed, could drive that reptile permanently from his mind. Memory obliges. He rushed back for Oliver. In good time too, for an elongated figure in lavender pajamas was just emerging from the stateroom, the door of which Jim had left open, with the box containing Oliver.

"Well, Mr. Claxton, a nice evening for a fire," said Jim snatching the box from him after a somewhat brusk jolt to the chin.

When he returned to the hectic scene of abandoning ship, he was surprised. It was hectic no longer. Half-clothed maidens were slipping into beach robes as matter-of-fact as workmen putting on their coats. There were no flames, no smoke, and the glare had faded into a moonlit night. He stopped Miss Nancy Perkins, who, shrouded in a blanket, and stifling a yawn, was returning to her couch.

"Fire?" she sleepily echoed his question. "Oh, now I know what you mean. Was it really as good as that?"

On the roof of the deckhouse the snappy stout cameraman was handing down his camera to the publicity man.

"Told you Aleck was cooking up something," said Nancy. "Watch for news reel—'Baby Stars routed from bed by fire at sea.'"

"The captain permitted—"

"Poof! Aleck told him how it would picturize his fire drill and exhibit the fine discipline of his crew."

"Why weren't the other passengers notified?"

"You'd be in the way. We tried to be quiet."

"Somebody woke me, though," he said.

He remembered the thump on his door. Exactly, somebody wanted him out, and wanted him in such a hurry to get out as to forget to lock the door. Somebody had wanted to steal Oliver. And it was Claxton who had furnished the idea that Aleck cooked. Think of setting a ship on fire, even though spuriously, all for a pink alligator! A most desperate citizen, this mysterious Claxton!

THE next morning he saw Claxton chummily smoking a cigar with the captain, and the easy impertinence of it exasperated Jim into telling the captain of Claxton's attempted larceny. But the hawk face was imperturbable with its lethargic, patronizing cheerfulness.

"And I'd recommend, Mr. Nolan," the captain added, very severely, "if the camera you mention is so strangely valuable, that you leave it with the purser for safe-keeping!"

Jim wondered if the purser would catch flies for Oliver, and declined to act on the captain's suggestion, whereat the captain frowned and glanced significantly at the smiling Mr. Claxton.

It was all mighty queer, but things got queerer yet. They had passed through the Canal—and a busy publicity passage it was, for the lovely twinkling luminaries aboard—and the Baby Farm had turned her prow northward in the rolled gray waters of the Atlantic when quite spontaneously, quite like an epidemic, various Baby Stars made a dead set for the hithero negligible Jim Nolan. On the puzzled and innocent and helpless young man they exercised their wiles and smiles and adept misbehaving eyes. Believe it or not, prosaic Jim was flame, and they the moths.

Once Claxton paused to interrupt a cluster of them at their depredations. "One at a time, babies, one at a time," he teased them. "Modern vamps—u'm, rotten technique, though! Even your grandmammies knew that three are a crowd."

They worked each according to type, or as a casting director would classify them in his file index. There was the Muriel one—golden hair, blue eyes, sunbonnet naïveté. She caught Jim alone, between decks astern where he was watching the log. She gave a start, lisped her surprise, prattled confidingly, and shyly yet undeniably offered the rosebud of her lips to be plucked. Jim squirmed.

"Oh, Mr. Nolan, I do so want to take your picture," she cooed. "You have a camera, haven't you?"

"It's—it's out of order."

"Oh, really? But—oh, I tell you!—let's try to fix it together?"

If the mind has nostrils, the same as it has an eye, then these nostrils of Jim twitched, smelling out something.

"Sorry," he told Blue Eyes, "but I don't think you need any more cameras in your young life."

She forgot to lisp as he turned away. "Oh, oh, oh, you ornery traitor!" she rasped shrilly at his back.

Then there was the carefully tousled hoyden—she who was "publicized" as "America's Tomboy," very cute and very rude with whatever went on inside under her rowdy Circassian bob. "I'll be damned if I think any lady should swear to excess," was one of her favorite lines, and you had to laugh heartily each time or get off the ship. Working out her own technique, she tried taking Jim roughly by storm. Cutely she slapped out of his hand a book he was reading and perched herself on the arm of his steamer chair. She could just be thrilled to death, she acknowledged breezily, by an honest-to-goodness heavy, meaning villain, in real life, and could love him to death. Death and damnation were, it seemed, the dear child's favorite fruit. She kissed him stormily before he knew it, and there now, couldn't he see that she simply adored him for being such a very devil?

"Oh, Lord!" Jim groaned, mopping off the moist imprint with his handkerchief. And then he was surprised—at how easily she was rebuffed, this presumably hard-boiled lassie. He had said nothing else, but he couldn't hide his disgust, and that did it. "Oh, I'm sorry!" he said as the genuine tears of a very little girl who had been hurt came into her eyes, but she was stumbling blindly to her room. He heard a penitent sob—"I—I guess I better stick to the pictures."

OF COURSE there was the python type—slinky, sinuous, undulating. With her entwining methods this one had poor Jim in a cold sweat for a time. Having the shape, the eyes, the Spanish shawl and high comb, Dolorina Castenada—really Maggie Rafferty—stole swiftly upon him in the silence and the moonlight where he sat alone upon the deck before his open stateroom door.

"Help me! Oh, hellup me!" she panted, coiling her gleaming white arms around his neck as he got to his feet and drawing him into the dark stateroom as though something pursued. He switched on the light, she closed the door, and there they were. So often the script has it just so! She laughed, too—laughter that was soft gurgling mockery, and likewise according to the script, for had she not trapped him with her device of a damsel pursued? Now hand on hip, elbow akimbo under the fringed shawl, she let her midnight eyes register teasing allure, but Jim saw something else. He saw that she was a scared kid all right, doing this sort of thing with no megaphone and director near. The discovery banished his cold sweat, and he even smiled, if the twisted curl of his lip could be called that. Pictures he had seen were as a manual of conduct, and he knew what to do. He turned the key of the closed door a couple of times and put the key in his pocket, but Dolorina's, or Maggie's midnight eyes were languishing no longer. They were twin distended orbs in a face drenched white, so that Jim was a little frightened himself.

"It's enough," he said hastily. "Get going!"

"Buh-buh-buh—" whimpered the girl.

"Oh, you mean the key? Yes, I have it, but the door is still there. Ready for use."

She sidled round him, wide-eyed and unbelieving, and grabbed and turned the doorknob, and the door opened. Jim laughed, and she broke down.

"Whah-whah-what's the matter with my stuff?" she wailed.

Jim considered this. As an artist she was much discouraged. "Mightn't it be," he suggested, beaming on her, "because that's what it is—stuff?"

"Oh," she cried, "I'd much rather not pretend, and scratch your eyes out for what you are, you dog!"

"Say—" he ejaculated, at a loss, but she fled on the gust of her generous fury.

Jim closed the door. "Gosh!" he sighed. They vamped him, and then they blackguarded him. What was the matter with them?

Sleep stopped him puzzling about it finally, and in the dead reaches of the night he awoke to more trouble, only this time it seemed to be genuine he-man trouble. A burglar was in his room. Even aboard ship you would call it that. But for shipboard, it was certainly an unusual sort of burglar, as he could see by the soft moonlight coming through the slats, a burglar that might have stepped in here off the Desert of Sahara, one in cork helmet and white riding breeches and boots, with belt and pistol and everything. He flung back the single sheet covering him, and made a flying tackle, catching the intruder around the knees. They threshed about for a while, and then Jim checked his activities, absolutely knocked out, for what knocked him out was a high female treble from his adversary saying "Ouch!" Sorry, but madder yet, he remembered that he had just succeeded in pasting her a dandy one in the eye.

He untangled himself and snapped on the light. The girl in breeches, a heroine of the Perils-of-Pauline type, was sitting on the floor and bawling. She was a ripened, athletic blonde, and one eye was going black. Something not in the script had palpably been slipped over on her too, for Pauline with all her Perils had never been roughed, or mussed unbecomingly, like this.

"Quit it," said Jim. "Quit that blubbering, and tell me—"

"Boo-hoo," she replied, "I was only trying to save my country at great—boo-hoo, boo-hoo—peril to myself—and—and you had to go and hit me in the eye!"

"Save your country?" Then, on the floor, where it had fallen, Jim saw his camera. The fall had broken the lock, but the slide was intact and he quickly made certain that the lizard was inside. "Now what," he asked, "has this old camera to do with saving your country? And who put you up to stealing it?"

"I—I can't tell you!"

"And the rest of you—all after this camera?"

"I—I can't tell you!"

"Then get up!" He helped her up. "And good night. I'm sorry about your eye."

And that was another thing—they always made him sorry.

So far this quaint penchant of the Babes for a pink lizard had not extended to Miss Nancy Perkins. But if Nancy, with her resourceful wits, tried her hand at it, good night indeed! Yet he felt oddly slighted by her neglect when all the others . . .

She greeted him on deck next day by clasping her hands in mock idolatry. "O Girl-Proof Wonder!" she reverently gasped.

"Say, you tell me," he demanded. "What's this scourge, anyway, that's raging in the girl kingdom? I know it's not my beautiful squint eyes—"

"It might be at that," said Miss Nancy, "only their judgment is so rotten."

"You know," he insisted. "What's it all about?"

"Then I must tell you what you are, but you'll be surprised."

"I'm a dog. I'm a traitor. And one wanted to save her country."

"They all did, the dear little hundred-percents, but each in her own particular rôle. You didn't know, did you, that you hold the destiny of America in your hands, or rather in that old camera, and that you are on your way to New York to sell them to the representative of a foreign power."

"Gosh," said Jim, "I am surprised."

"I knew you'd be, and so that explains the secret of your fatal fascination. So dangerous a man and yet so—"

"Commonplace."

"Nice," amended Nancy. .

"Nonsense! I mean, all of it. How did they get any suzh idea?"

"From the long-legged man."

"Claxton?"

"Yes. He showed us his star—Secret Service. He told us what you are and about the papers—*hist*, the papers!—that you carry concealed in that dummy camera you guard so carefully. And what could you expect? The busy little heroines all got busy to get the papers. They love their country, but think of the publicity, too. Nation-wide front-page spread, and the successful heroine's picture two-three columns wide. Mr. Claxton is a right foxy persuader, and all hands went right to work saving flag and country as they're saved in the pictures."

"They believed that rot?"

"Sure. They've had practice, believing the scenarios."

"But you?"

SHE closed one eye and looked at him, like a surveyor, and shook her head.

"No," she decided, "you're miscast. As a heavy, you don't do. And so I couldn't believe it, even though the captain himself did. My dratted intellect," she sighed, "keeps getting in the way of my having a good time. But, just the same, I'd like to know what in thunder you've got in that camera."

He wouldn't tell her. He wouldn't risk losing her interest in him, he told her.

"Whew," she exclaimed at that, "as if anyone so complimentary and hateful in the same breath could fail to hold any girl's interest!"

"Deliver me from the others, but you—"

She got out of his reach then, as a precaution.

"Girl-Proof Wonder?" she mused aloud, sadly.

And again he was sorry, though not constrained to say so. He was sorry, this time, that this one would not bide a wee bit longer.

As with the Panama Canal, symbol of America's destiny, New York and New York's skyline lapsed into merest background for the arrival "in person," of the Baby Farm's contingent of Hollywood's palpitant loveliness. Reporters jockeyed to the dock by adroit publicity men, more picture taking, crush of villagers eager to recognize screen personalities in the flesh—oh, well, you've read it all in the papers. After the reception everybody went to the Giltledge Hotel. Jim went, too. He thought he might as well. Good enough hotel probably; so many going there. He offered Miss Perkins a lift there, and she accepted. He was almost grateful to Oliver, and almost a shade jealous of him, for keeping alive Miss Perkins's interest in himself. He personally held the camera with Oliver inside on his lap during the trip uptown in the taxi, and Nancy's contemplative gaze dwelt more on Oliver's camouflaged kennel than on Oliver's custodian. But that was all right, because he could look at Nancy.

"The foolishness they ask you to believe in chemistry," he remarked, his tone worried and skeptical. "For instance, I've always been taught that saccharine is the sweetest thing there is."

[*Continued on page 161*]

Obstacles Cut No Ice With Them

Joe Moore, amateur speed champion, took his first lessons as an office boy in a city rink, and only a few years ago Frieda Petersen, professional figure skater, couldn't stand upright on the ice

by Elon Jessup

CORRECT form is the be all and end all of ice-skating. Here confidence is as essential as it is in swimming, and balance even more important than in golf. Then comes coordination of eyes and feet, direction and control. Speed will follow naturally if you have it in you. Many a beginner or indifferently good amateur could make rapid progress with the help of a little expert direction. In this article some of the world's best skaters give you invaluable hints from their own experience.

IN SPEED skating, the amateur indoor champion of the United States and Canada is Joe Moore. For six years running—perhaps it would be better to say skating—he has held this title. During part of this time he was holder of the International Outdoor Championship as well. It would appear that New York breeds some pretty sturdy human material on West Forty-seventh Street "over by the docks."

But if you expect something hard-bitten or robustious about Joe Moore you are likely to wonder when you see him if you have met the right man. You see a slender, self-contained, rather bashful young man in his early twenties who looks like anything but a Viking of the ice. Later you learn that his parents once thought him "delicate." This opinion, however, is not confirmed by his childhood playmates. At any rate you can still see why his mother and father thought so. This impression vanishes forever once you have seen Joe Moore on skates.

A lively one-round scrap with no decision was once fought by this future international skating champion. It took two other world's champions to stop him, but they have been fast friends ever since. And fast is right. Their respective opponents today will testify as to just how fast they are.

Little Joe Moore, poised on the stoop of their mutual abode on crowded, clattering West Forty-seventh Street, regarded his buddy Joe Lynch with scorn.

"Whaddye mean you're going to be the world's champeen boxer?" he demanded. Young Mr. Moore became heavily humorous. "Go on, quit yer kiddin'," he laughed tauntingly. "A midget like you, champeen! That's a good one. Where's yer wallop?"

Said wallop was produced instantaneously. And be it said young Joe possessed an uncommonly forceful wallop for a youngster of his "tender" years. The stoop became a wild pin-wheel of small boy which presently crashed down the steps to the sidewalk, still spinning. "Fight! Fight!" yelled boyish trebles from every direction and an enthralled circle of "the gang" appeared at once as if by magic. So did the nearest policeman. Amid anguished moans of disappointment he stopped the fight. He was a "cop" who always could. He was Pat MacDonald, the Olympic weight thrower.

Joe Moore still thinks the boast of his friend Joe Lynch was funny, but for a different reason. Not so many years after the set-to, young Lynch was crowned bantam-weight boxing champion of the world. And just about the same time an individual named Joe Moore began to break world's records as a speed skater.

"Joe could always run like a deer," says Joe Lynch, the fighter. "When we were kids, many's the time he scooped up our marbles and beat it. He always got away clean because none of us could catch him. He's got all-around athletic ability now. He's a good ball player and a fast swimmer."

[*Continued on page 164*]

Joe Moore has held the amateur indoor speed skating championship of the United States and Canada for six years. He was city born and bred, and is a product of New York's skating rinks. Frieda Peterson, a "Pavlowa of the ice," is an exhibition figure skater, whose extraordinary grace and rhythm on the ice have been developed within a comparatively few years.

Pictures like this bird's-eye view of New York harbor were made possible by the several inventions of Sherman Mills Fairchild. Beginning as an amateur camera enthusiast, young Mr. Fairchild perfected one important improvement after another. At twenty-nine he is preeminent in his chosen field, which now includes the making of maps by aërial photography.

Father's Money Didn't Hurt Him

Sherman Fairchild, at twenty-nine, is president of five successful aviation companies growing out of his inventions. Although heir to a fortune, he buckled down to work with all the grit and determination of a youngster who must make good or starve

by Samuel Taylor Moore

THE elder Fairchild, who made a fortune from his own inventions, must have looked with mixed feelings on his son's expensive camera hobby. Not only once, but several times, Fairchild Senior had to reach into his pocket to pay for experiments costing thirty thousand dollars or more. Meanwhile young Sherman was working night and day to equip himself as an expert photographer, an engineer, and a qualified air pilot. Now he is a conspicuous success in a highly specialized field where the obstacles seemed insurmountable.

THE experts were stumped.

It was back in July of 1917 when the staff technicians of the largest photographic manufacturing plant in the world had evolved an aërial camera for America's fledgling birdmen to employ in taking pictures of the Hindenburg line. It was a good camera—if only it could be made to function. The trouble was in the automatic film spacing mechanism. The long reel of celluloid would jump and overlap, jam and tear. Every apparent solution, including perforations along the edges, proved abortive in practice. With urgency a prime consideration, the army officer in charge of experiments wired to Washington for the best camera specialist available.

Among the patriotic horde of volunteer specialists which had invaded the Capital following the declaration of war had been a twenty-one-year-old student named Sherman Mills Fairchild. As an amateur inventor he had devised several novel camera mechanisms, including an automatic flashlight device that permitted the taking of snapshots of moving objects at night. When Fairchild's application for enlistment in the Signal Corps had been turned down because of his health, he had applied for a position as a civilian instructor in photography. No civilians were being given such employment he learned. Disconsolate, he returned to his family home at Oneonta, New York, feeling thoroughly useless.

Consequently, when he received a telegram to proceed to Rochester he was highly elated. It was his chance to "join the war." The older men at the photographic plant, who had spent years in laboratory work, looked askance at the youngster detailed to help solve a highly technical problem. Without being over-gracious they permitted him to spend a day studying the obstreperous picture box.

Traveling back to Utica by train that night, the big idea came to the young inventor in a flash, a device that would not only solve their problem but would use ordinary film as well. So excited did he become in working out each detail in his mind that he neglected, before leaving Utica, to look at the gasoline tank in his automobile. At midnight on a lonely road the motor coughed consumptively and died through lack of fuel, leaving the triumphant inventor to complete his journey of several miles on foot. But by the time he tramped home, he had worked out the whole problem, complete to the last detail. And when it was put up to the photographic experts in Rochester they had to admit that the "kid" had solved the jam.

With the prestige of this speedy solution of a knotty problem behind him, young Fairchild went direct to Washington.

"I can build a better aërial camera than any now in use, one that will be entirely automatic and fool-proof," he told a high officer in the Signal Corps. "Let me use an electric mechanism and I'll simplify it, too." The army officer refused to agree to the use of electrical contacts but he told the anxious youth to go ahead and build his better camera.

The Armistice was being negotiated before Sherman Fairchild completed his contract, but so revolutionary and at the same time satisfactory was the new "box" that an order for two more was immediately given him. He began work on the new machines in a dinky little office with two draftsmen. So tiny were the dimensions of the room that when a visitor called, it was necessary for one of the employees to pass out into the corridor before the caller could gain admittance. That was in 1919.

Today, enterprises developed from Mr. Fairchild's camera have offices in principal cities throughout the country, and branch production plants in Dallas, Los Angeles and Grand Mere, Canada. He has a small, but up-to-date aircraft factory at Farmingdale, Long Island for manufacturing airplanes according to his own ideas. Over a hundred and twenty-five employees are on his payroll. Whenever you look at an aërial photograph, or reproduction, the chances are ten to one that if the picture was not snapped by one of Mr. Fairchild's flying photographers, it was at least recorded through the lens of a Fairchild camera. Fairchild aërial picture-taking machines are the official cameras of the United States Army and Navy, the Brazilian and Canadian Governments.

At twenty-nine years of age the young man whose genius confounded the experts at Rochester in 1917, is president of five financially successful companies growing out of the aërial camera. And still he goes on inventing more and more remarkable devices which shall be described hereafter. Meanwhile, through the recent death of his father, the late George W. Fairchild, new responsibilities have been heaped on the shoulders of this remarkable young man. He is now administrator of one of the great American fortunes and a director in several nationally known corporations.

Father Started as an $8.00 Clerk

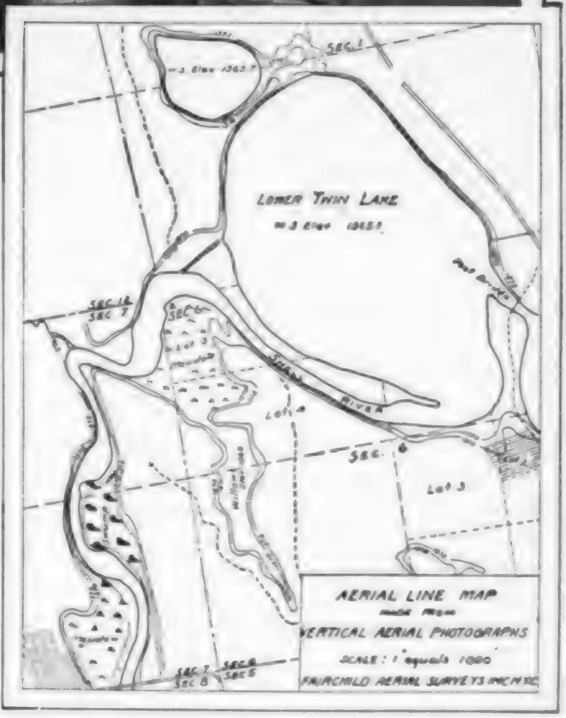
There can be no doubt that Sherman Fairchild is one of those rare cases where a son has inherited in full measure the inventive genius and boundless energy of a remarkable father. George W. Fairchild started life as a clerk at eight dollars a month. When he died he left behind him a vast record of achievement to which his great fortune was really incidental. He was Chairman of the Board of Directors of the International Business Machines Corporation, which builds most of the computing, tabulating, and recording machines in use in modern business offices. Typewriters, adding-machines and calculating-machines are but a few of the present well-known inventions which he helped to father and promote. The present dial telephone, the computing scale, and the complicated tabulating machines on which the Government keeps the census, are other Fairchild devices which go to make up a long list.

Sherman Fairchild's career consequently fails of the rags to riches category right at the very start. His early experiments were financed by a wealthy father. But for that very reason it is all the more remarkable. Why does one always connect "poor" and "struggling" with the word inventor? Obviously because it is the poor boy who has the incentive to struggle through the manifold obstacles that harass any inventor, be he poor or rich. Yet here is a young man, born wealthy and with assured position, who has buckled down to work with all the grit and determination of a youngster who must create or starve. John Hays Hammond Jr. and Lawrence B. Sperry, the aviator who met his tragic death in the British Channel, are other outstanding inventors of this type, but there are not many such. Like them, Fairchild's Edisonian passion for work and invention is the expression of a sincere love of creative endeavor and achievement.

When Sherman Fairchild was told to go ahead and build his better camera back in 1917 he decided to make his point of departure with the shutter mechanism. Practically all cameras, with the notable exception of the Graflex, have a "between-the-lens" shutter, working at a speed of 1/50th of a second, with lenses not more than one inch in diameter. Now the lenses of aërial cameras must be at least two and a half inches in diameter and require a speed of operation up to 1/150th of a second. After repeated trials the army experts had decided that it was impossible to enlarge the "between-the-lens" shutter sufficiently for the aërial camera without sacrificing the important factor of speed. Whereupon they adopted a focal plane shutter which provided the desired high speed.

THE older experts were proved right in believing that it was impossible to enlarge the existing type of "between-the-lens" shutter. Yet Fairchild knew that this was the only reliable type for aërial work. Without sacrificing speed he provided the same percentage of efficiency as the focal lens camera, with the added qualities of greater evenness in exposure, reliability and simplicity of design. Today he is building cameras with a four-inch clear opening. No other mechanism in the world is accelerated and stopped so quickly.

The major difficulty to be solved was the mechanism to open and close the shutter in 1/150th of a second. Most of the metals experimented would crumble like dry bread from the terrific shock imposed in starting and stopping so quickly. The solution came in an automatic link motion which started and stopped the leaves with comparative slowness and operated with an extremely hard Swedish spring steel. The word slowly must be considered in its comparative sense for there is no method by which the brevity of 1/150th of a second can be dramatized to the average person.



Mr. Fairchild (at the right in the foreground) found it necessary to become an air pilot before he could work out some of the difficulties that cropped up in connection with his use of the aërial camera. One of the things he has made possible is an accurate survey of timber lands and dam sites from the air. An aërial line map, made from vertical photographs and with contours plotted, can be accurate to within one-twentieth of an inch.

One after the other various improvements were made in the aërial camera so that it would work with the highest possible efficiency. It has now been brought to such a point of accuracy that maps to satisfy the most critical engineer can be made from the negatives. The "between-the-lens" shutter eliminated the distortion which was a defect of the focal plane shutter, a glass plate held the film in the correct plane and marked each exposure so that any shrinkage could be accurately computed. The camera has since been made completely automatic so that today the flying photographer sets a timing device and the machine automatically takes pictures with clockwork accuracy. The driving power is furnished by a small 12-volt motor.

During the winter of 1917-1918 Fairchild kept up a race against time to get a camera completed that could be used at the front in France. Finally, in the fall of 1918, the new camera, embodying all its revolutionary ideas, was demonstrated before a board of experts. It was received with acclaim. Incidentally, Mr. Fairchild made his maiden airplane flight on that occasion. A few weeks later came the Armistice. It was too late for the Fairchild camera to help win the war, but the young inventor, now thoroughly wrapped up in his new idea, kept plugging steadily ahead.

Some time after November 11th he was awarded a contract for two additional cameras at a price of twenty-five hundred dollars each. Before proceeding, he submitted his bill for the costly experimental work on the first machine. It amounted to forty thousand dollars. The government auditor blinked a few times, crisply remarked that war profiteering had gone far enough and offered a compromise settlement of seven thousand dollars. At that point, Mr. Fairchild, Senior, rose to object to acceptance of the order for the two new cameras. He had only grumbled mildly as he pocketed a thirty-three thousand dollar loss on the first experimental machine. In the flush of war patriotism he did not protest. But wasn't it time now for Sherman to give up this new contract and settle down to the business of making time clocks?

Sherman didn't think so. He wanted to build an aërial camera with an electric mechanism that would further simplify it. When the plans were drawn he realized that he must build special machinery. That meant more invention, drafting and planning. At that point unexpected assistance arrived. Ernest Robinson, for seven years general manager of the International Time Recording Company and later chief engineer of the Royal Typewriter Company, had tired of quantity production of large, cheap mechanisms. Happily, he was financially independent and his interest was centered in the manufacture of intricate, precision mechanisms. With confidence in the capabilities of Sherman Fairchild he coupled his genius and experience with that of the younger man. They went at the new series of problems hammer and tongs. Yet it was two years later before the two additional cameras were completed and delivered. Mr. Fairchild, Senior, had paid out an additional forty-five thousand dollars, but he had come to be resigned over the expense of his son's "hobby."

Nevertheless, the father scratched his head dubiously when Sherman reported with enthusiasm that he had received a new government contract for twenty additional machines. That contract proved a turning point in the business, however. It returned a small profit.

A $23,000 Mistake

With the aërial camera perfected, except for constant minor refinements, Sherman Fairchild decided that a field existed for aërial photography in peace. An airplane was rented and taking a camera aloft, a photographer named Hamilton clicked the shutter over various sections of New Jersey. One of the best views was of the Monmouth Hotel at Spring Lake. At that time it was considered a fine clear picture. Today Mr. Fairchild describes it as a "fuzzigraph." It required a long time to locate the owner on the ground. His resistance to spending money withered under the sales talk of Mr. Hamilton. He agreed to pay twenty-five dollars for the photograph. It was Sherman Fairchild's first real sale.

Shortly thereafter word reached the ears of Sherman Fairchild that the city of Newark, New Jersey, in planning an advertising campaign discovered that the most serious handicap was a lack of maps showing the city to advantage. The guns of the Fairchild organization were trained on Newark's city fathers. The Solons never had a chance to escape. When the contract was closed at a price of seven thousand dollars, a holiday was declared in the Fairchild office and the staff participated in a notable celebration.

That job provided experience at considerable financial cost. The old war-time method for making an aërial map or mosaic was to match several vertical aërial photographs together by overlapping. Everyone has seen such crazy-quilt maps of war sectors in France. For military purposes such maps were invaluable, but for anything like accurate peace-time surveying, they had decided failings. The method would be satisfactory for a few prints, but when one attempted to piece together a hundred or more, the system proved unworkable. Four or five prints would match together, but then distortion on the outer edges would begin to show a cumulative error and the adjoining prints would not "fit." It was therefore necessary to determine some mechanical method of orienting the position of each print. After much experimentation and research a system was evolved whereby it became possible to start laying down prints on several parts of a board at the same time and have them all match perfectly.

It was also found impossible to pilot an airplane at an *exact* constant altitude. Every negative therefore, must be rephotographed down to the same exact scale. The ordinary enlarging camera, in which each print was scaled and focused, proved too slow and laborious a method for the production which Mr. Fairchild had in mind. The results depended too much on the pilot and rejections were numerous. So the old cameras were thrown out and the young inventor designed automatic cameras to replace them. These were provided with two movable scales lighted by small red lights. When the operator receives an order to enlarge a certain negative 1.823 times, he sets his two scales at 1.823 and the camera is automatically in focus and set to the proper enlargement.

It developed that only one pilot in five is competent to fly a photographic plane. He must align a course against crosswinds so that photographs will overlap properly, keep his plane at a fairly constant altitude despite bumpy airholes, and maneuver at a horizontal angle 10,000 feet above the ground. The photographer at first found as many problems. The speed of travel varied widely according to whether the wind was a headwind or a tailwind, retarding or accelerating flight. The timing apparatus had to be adjusted accordingly. A spirit bubble like a carpenter's level had to be constantly watched to insure the camera's being vertical at all times. All this work had

This is an oblique view of a section of Manhattan's skyline taken when the five boroughs of Greater New York were mapped photographically. More than two thousand separate vertical exposures had to be pieced together to represent the six hundred and twenty-five square miles of territory on a scale of six hundred feet to one inch. In making maps, the camera automatically adjusts itself to varying flying levels and remains focused at right angles to the earth. The result is an overlapping series of "vertical" pictures as distinguished from the oblique view which is shown here.

to be done in a single season, for obviously it wouldn't do to have a part of the picture against a snow-whitened background and the rest with foliage blooming. Mist and clouds caused many postponements. The best working average, allowing for weather conditions, is one day in three and the worst, one day in thirty. The completion of that Newark job might have discouraged another young executive. As a matter of fact it had cost him thirty thousand dollars to finish. But the experience gained was inestimable. For future jobs a sound basis of cost was known.

Meanwhile Sherman Fairchild was learning that he had a lot to know before he could really finish some of the problems he had set himself. He had to turn himself, as quickly as possible, into an expert engineer. So, all the time he was toiling over those first two cameras, he tutored at night in the score of subjects it was necessary for him to pass examinations on, before he could enter the Graduate Engineering School of Columbia University. Then two summers and one winter he attended the morning sessions, getting down to his office at 2:30 in the afternoon and working generally until 11 o'clock at night. The science of aerodynamics next confronted him. He had to really understand the principles of flying. There is a suggestion of the prima donna temperament in the make-up of most aviators. When they are telling a non-flyer some facts about ethereal navigation they are apt unconsciously to become a bit contemptuous. So Sherman Fairchild had to work himself out of the "kiwi" class. In a comparatively short time he had learned to fly a ship and thereafter he met pilots and photographers on a more equal footing.

The rented standard airplanes proved unsatisfactory and as a result three successive types of special camera planes were designed and built. To enable him to collaborate on the design of a satisfactory camera plane as well as to carry out his aircraft construction program for the future, Sherman Fairchild is once more going to school. An arrangement has been made with the School of Aeronautic Engineering of New York University, to condense its four-year course into one year for the sole benefit of Mr. Fairchild. Already he is half-way through the course.

The high point to date in the aërial mapping projects of Fairchild's surveying business was the completion last year of a map of the five boroughs of Greater New York, covering six hundred and twenty-five square miles of territory. It was in such detail that crowds at Coney Island and traffic on Fifth Avenue were distinctly visible. It took more than two thousand exposures to complete this work. Every clear day in the course of the job three planes were over the city and a total of three thousand miles were flown. To assemble the two thousand small prints into one large map required the services of fifteen engineers and surveyors, checking controls and piecing the pictures together like a gigantic jig-saw puzzle. Two maps were completed, one at the scale of one inch to six hundred feet and the other at a scale of one inch to two thousand feet. Engineers who at first disputed the accuracy of aërial maps have now been obliged to concede that the impossible has been accomplished.

A Whole City in One Picture

Aërial maps are now made on scales varying from one hundred feet equals one inch to two thousand feet equals one inch. These accurately made maps are called photographic maps to distinguish them from the mosaic, which is a rough assemblage of prints not to exact scale. The photographic map serves a number of uses which the old-fashioned line maps did not. The most recent use demonstrated is in surveying potential dam sites for hydro-electric projects.

Today, enlarged photographs, made from aërial negatives, are taken into the field where the contours are plotted by ground engineers. One crew can sketch the necessary lines on two hundred acres a day, while without maps twenty acres a day was considered a good average. The young engineer was so confident of the accuracy and reliability of contour maps made by his process that he took under bond a contract from a large northern Wisconsin power company. Over an area of seventy-two square miles he guaranteed every point to be within fifty feet of its true location. On the finished map fifty feet would mean one-twentieth of an inch. This gives some idea of the accuracy required. The power company accepted the contract. So accurate were the finished maps that practically every company doing that sort of work in the United States has since adopted this method.

Other uses for vertical aërial photographs include municipal problems, tax assessment work, traffic surveys or zoning plans. City planning boards utilize air maps to work out beautification and improvement projects in detail. One of the most remarkable aërial photographs of a city ever taken was snapped by Lieutenant Albert W. Stevens of the United States Army Air Service. From an altitude of 31,540 feet, half a mile higher than Mount Everest, he focused his Fairchild camera on the city of Dayton, Ohio, registering most of the city in one single photograph.

Up in Canada, owners of timber lands had experimented with airplanes in surveying their acreages. Mr. Fairchild organized a Canadian Company and went after this business. Today he is serving several timber and wood-pulp companies such as Laurentide, Wayagamack and the MacLaren Company. The aërial maps show burned acres, rock outcroppings, blow-downs, swamps and logs stranded above river flood lines. Scrub brush, second growth and primitive timber are easily distinguished by an amateur. Experts can calculate to a nicety the amount of available timber and locate their saw mills strategically. Cedar, hemlock, basswood and spruce, are readily identified. From ten to twenty square miles of timber lands can be photographed in a day.

So much for what are called "verticals"—photographs taken straight down. Oblique views are used to illustrate advertising copy, to display country estates, to visualize industrial plants and extension projects.

Sherman Mills Fairchild is a significant figure in the world of aeronautics. He has youth and with it unbounded faith in the future. He is an aeronautic engineer and an "air-flyer" as well. He has unlimited fortune to finance his ideas and he has had the common sense to surround himself with first-class engineers and executives.

It is obviously his ambition to be one of the dominating influences in shaping aviation in this country. He has begun building small enclosed cabin planes, which he expects the average person can fly with a few hours' instruction. And he is already preparing to operate a number of aërial freight and passenger lines beginning this year.

There is nothing of the eccentric inventor about this young bachelor, no trousers bagging at the knees and disheveled hair. His demeanor is modest to the point of shyness, his smile bashful though infectious. His recreation is in driving his own automobile, flying, and playing golf—the latter when he can find time, which is seldom.

While I talked, an order was laid on his desk for an aërial map of a Mid-Western city. The contract called for the payment of a sum in five figures. Fairchild signed the contract rapidly and pushed it aside. It was part of the routine of an established business. I thought of the exumberation of that seven thousand dollar contract from the City of Newark only three years ago.

As I took my departure the young inventor, his black eyes snapping, was dashing into the drafting-room where blue-prints and specifications for his cam motor are being completed. Picture taking is behind him. He is working now in the future.

The Man They Hanged

A story of the days when New York was young

by Robert W. Chambers

Illustrated by Gayle Hoskins

Begin this serial with any instalment. The story up to this point is here.

I, DIRCK HAZLETT, have related how, in my eighteenth year, Captain William Kidd persuaded me to serve as secretary to his affianced bride, Mistress Oort, who won my heart almost as completely as did her ward, Sancia, whom I soon came to love. New York in 1669 was the rendezvous of pirates, or as they chose to call themselves, "gentlemen in the Red Sea Trade" or "*On the Account* privateersmen." And who was to know if the booty they brought back to port was taken from hostile Frenchmen or from our own English ships? For that reason, Captain Kidd, as honest and gentle a man as ever lived, would have nothing to do with it, refusing all offers, and sailing for England on his own personal business. Being vexed by a spirit of restlessness and a thirst for adventure, I fell in readily with a scheme to man and provision *The China Rose* and to sail into the St. Lawrence in quest of French merchantmen. Peter Breeze was captain, my old friend Riel de Lanois ship's doctor, and I, being proficient in the use of arms, lieutenant gunner. Hardly had we cleared port when it was discovered that Maddaleen Wyck, a young girl who had minded my house for me and was admired by Lanois, had come with us as stowaway. Three French ships we fired upon and boarded, taking them as fair prize. I was in command of the snow, *Hirondelle*, when a violent storm arose and separated us one from another. We were in danger of floundering when a Spaniard, *El Tigre*, sighted us and opened fire, killing all hands but Evan Morgan, the gunner's mate, and myself. Taken as prisoners, we were carried to St. Augustine where we were kept until, after what seemed an age, a ship arrived bringing letters from home.

This month's instalment.

WITHIN my letter were two. One was from Captain Kidd. The other from Sancia.

My eyes were somewhat glazed from unbidden tears and I trembled still and felt giddy and weak, but made my way out o' doors and back to my garden and the plaster wall where I sat me down to read my letters.

But first I made out to find my voice, and say to Evan who stood looking at me, "Be of good heart, friend, for our new Governor Fletcher in New York hath written to the Spaniard here in our behalf, and I have now before me letters from Captain Kidd and a lady of his family."

I cleared my eyes with my ragged sleeve, then unfolded the letter from Captain Kidd.

TO MR. DIRCK HAZLETT IN FLORIDA,
A prisoner to Spain in St. Augustine.

MY DEAR LAD:

We have your letters and I carried them immediately to the governor who arrived in New York in August of last year.

The governor hath kindly signified his desire that you and the gunner, Morgan, be exchanged against a Spanish lieutenant and a gunner, now in the *stadt-huis* jail and lately taken off the Carolina coast by the sloop *Pretty Polly*, privateer, Captain Josiah White.

I am taking all necessary steps to procure and hasten this proposed cartel of exchange, and I must say that Governor Fletcher seems polite and complacent and has been good enough to express a hope that terms may be arranged without too tedious a delay.

I think that he is most amiably inclined to exert himself because of the excellent account of you given by Captain Peter Breeze, of the sloop *The China*

Rose, privateer, in which you served with credit against the enemy.

When I returned from England in the fall of 1691 I was greatly saddened to learn that you and your prize the *Hirondelle*, snow, had not been heard of since the hurricane in November of that year.

And it was not until the arrival of your letters that anybody in New York—only excepting Sancia—believed that you were alive.

Now that we know you still live, we render thanks to God for His surpassing mercy, and shall do our utmost to relieve you of your captivity and hasten your return to those who love you and long to welcome you.

As, in all probability, you have had no news these two years and more, I give you a little before Sancia writes and gives you all.

On my return in 1691, I married my dear wife, Sarah Oort, and took her and Sancia to live in our house in Perel Straat, or, as all now call it, Great Queen Street.

In November of last year my wife bore me a daughter; and now our Sancia hath a little sister most tenderly beloved.

Save for our sadness concerning what all believed to have been your fate, we have been quietly happy in our home.

I have leased my ships and shall make no more voyages because I am near to forty years of age and have labored since early youth to gain a competence, and, having by God's mercy, acquired substantial fortune, design to live at ease with my wife and children untroubled by thought of gain or desire for riches other than I now possess.

One more voyage am I obliged to make, and that only as a passenger to London, where I have certain business that I should settle in person.

But I shall go aboard another man's ship, and return as soon as may be to my family, never again, I hope, to command any ship but pass the full afternoon of life soberly and in pleasant quiet with those I love.

As for politics, well, our new Governor, Colonel Benjamin Fletcher, seems to be a pleasant and jovial gentleman who drives about in a coach and six.

There is no certain news that the French prepare to do us any sudden mischief. I doubt it. Yet, Frontenac is an able, wily, and brave man.

The city grows apace. You shall see new houses, new streets, and new farms, beyond the Out-Ward. Also, in Garden Street, a new church is to be built for the Dutch, and another English Church upon that plot which is at the end of Wall Street and which is the grave-yard where lie your honored parents. And may God rest their souls and comfort them who I do not doubt are ever watching over the fortunes and safety of you, their only son.

Dirck, my family loves you dearly, and so do I.

Therefore, you shall not doubt that all are tireless and diligent in your behalf and mean to have you back again as soon as this may be accomplished.

We know you are dauntless, so we do not bid you have courage.

We only assure you of our love and purpose, and so leave you in God's hands, and believing that, under God's guidance and our poor efforts, you shall presently return to us.

And so sign myself with all compliments and affection,

Your most obedient servant to command,
WILLIAM KIDD.

I called Evan, and to him I read this heartening letter, and we clasped hands over it in silence, too full of joys and fears to utter a single word.

He lay down under the wall and, propping his chin on both arms, stared out to sea. I unfolded Sancia's letter:

DIRCK, MY BELOVED,

I knew you lived. God told me. And, since you sailed away, always, while on my knees for you, God has whispered to my soul that you had not died at sea but were alive.

For, since you sailed, with *The China Rose*, I have taken to my knees who formerly kneeled but seldom, which was a grave fault though I hope, long since atoned. For if by reason of tears and prayer and such a love and loneliness as never I dreamed could be, or ever possess my heart and mind—if, by reason of these I am forgiven for past indifference to God and folly of ingratitude, then maybe my prayers, for you were acceptable to Him, and He was kind enough to answer me as I wept upon my knees. He *did* tell me. I *knew* it, Dirck. And if I had not, I had died, I think.

Oh, let me confess me, dearest of men!—and shrive myself and be purged. For first, when *The China Rose* returned, and I learned that Maddaleen had so rashly hid aboard, I knew it was for love of you, and I flamed with jealousy and rage. Oh God, I sickened of life—so basely I conducted and so madly.

Well, I know not what might have happened to me who was only awaiting your arrival on your snow prize to flame again and strive to tear you from my heart. But there came from sea a rumor that your ship had gone down.

Then, oh, Dirck, in my terror I ran to Maddaleen to question her concerning the *Hirondelle*, and then learned that she was betrothed to Dr. Lanois, and that there never had been any cause for jealousy concerning you.

I don't know if it were that and the rumors of disaster that brought me to my knees. Oh, where had I now to go excepting to God alone? . . . And the dreadful winter days came, and the black nights, but not the *Hirondelle*. . . . You can never know, Dirck. . . . And that last kiss of all still warm and sweet on my mouth. . . . And I, yours! . . . No other man's, ever, whether you had died or lived. . . . All the years before me to remember and wait. . . . Wait till I died.

Well, was I truly a woman after all? Dirck, with our last kiss you *knew* I was even then. . . . And today am nearly eighteen years of age.

Father has written to you of our new circumstances, and how I have now a baby sister. She is like Mother—the same violet-like eyes and lovely features only her hair is a coppery red.

Dirck, Mother sends to you her love, and bids me say that we all shall run our legs off in your behalf and to hasten the joyous days of your return.

I love you madly. I may say it, now, at eighteen, and you cannot choose but believe me. Can you, Dirck?

Resolutely I put away jealousies, although I admit I have asked God to keep far away from you all beautiful Spanish ladies, and if you bring one back with you I shall die.

But you will not, will you, Dirck?

(Now comes Father to say that the pinnace leaves and my letter must go now or it cannot go with the flag.) Oh, Dirck, how can even my pen bear to take leave of you?

Oh, darling of my heart, I must seal my letter so a servant may carry it to that damned pinnace.

Farewell. Farewell, my heart and soul and all of me that is me!

Your loving, humble, dutiful and promised wife who takes leave of you with every sentiment of tenderness and obedience and is yours to command while the breath of life animates her body,

THY SANCIA.

In spite of all that was attempted in my behalf, my case appeared to advance but little. For one matter, flags went to and from Port Royal only infrequently; for another, the Spaniard is slow to move save when he draws dagger.

We never were unkindly treated, but there was no great kindness shown us, either; and life, for us, went on as it had for the last two years until came the Florida winter, once more, and Christmastide with its candles and chanting and processions, and after what seemed to me unnumbered centuries, came spring again. And, with April, a flag.

She was *The Black Swan*, sloop, Captain Weston, out of Port Royal, and she carried not only a flag, but two Spanish prisoners from New York, Lieutenant Ruiz Serrano and Antonio Lopez, gunner's mate.

Why there ensued further delay, I know not, but it was another week before the Spaniards delivered to Evan Morgan and me the two sea-chests sent to us from New York, and in which was money for us, proper apparel, and my sword and shoulder belt and boots.

Now my amiable Captain Alverez carried me to the governor where this great man sat behind a carved table in company with two priests and the Commandant of the Fortress.

I bowed to the dark-visaged and coldly dignified Dons, and to the priests, and all rendered me my salute with perfect curtesy.

Then the governor nodded, and a priest handed to me a letter of identification addressed to the governor and sealed with the seal of New York. The seal was broken.

"Señor Governor," said I, "am I to read this letter?"

He slowly inclined his handsome head. So I unfolded the letter and saw that it was a paper which identified both me and Evan Morgan. And thus it began under the date:

"Benjamin Fletcher, Captain General and Governor-in-Chief of the Province of New York and the territories and tracts of land dependent thereon in America, and Vice-Admiral of the same, and Lieutenant Commander-in-Chief of the Militia, and of all the forces by sea and land within the Colony of Connecticut, and of all the forts and places of strength within the same, and now in council within the Fort of New York—

"To whom it may concern,

"Greetings—"

I raised my head and looked at the stately Spanish Governor to see how this pompous flourish had affected him: and he gazed back at me with grave irony.

I thought to myself that we had another ass for a Governor of New York, and felt the mortification burn my cheeks.

But I read on, and how this same provincial potentate, Colonel Fletcher, condescends to admit my identity, along with that of "one Evan Morgan, gunner's mate," and all in the stiff language of some great dignitary who issues a patent for a manor rather than a simple acknowledgment that Evan and I were citizens of New York.

"A very ass," thought I, but kept my countenance and bowed to the silent and politely ironic Don.

I then took ceremonious leave of them and of Captain Alverez.

Then guarded by Spanish soldiers with the two blacks carrying our sea-chests upon their heads, we went out of the sally-port and down to the water where a long-boat lay manned by the first English faces I had gazed upon in three whole years. The lieutenant in command shook hands with me.

Beyond in the stream, I saw *The Black Swan*, lying at anchor. When we embarked with our chests, the sloop gave us three guns which seemed to astonish the Dons on the ramparts, and was done, of course, in sheer frolic.

Well, no sooner were we aboard than the sloop weighed and made sail. And that was the very last that ever I have seen of the Fortress of San Marco and the town of St. Augustine.

ON OUR voyage to Port Royal there was nothing remarkable. The early May weather was soft, the breezes light, and frequently we were becalmed and got out our oars. It was two months too early for West Indian hurricanes and there was little to be dreaded of any foul weather. We encountered none into Port Royal.

This small and mean town looked to us like a very refuge in Paradise, and it thrilled our very hearts to set foot once more upon dear, old English soil.

Here at a tavern we baited to await a ship to New York. Tavern and food were poor, but the people kind though very slack, and it did not seem a healthy place to me where were more gravestones to be seen than living inhabitants.

Sometimes out of this port had come the Yellow Death to New York, but how it arises and how it is carried nobody seems to know. Yet all know that the first frost ends the plague, and it seems to me that, building upon this

Captain Kidd sailed for England in October. Sarah wept, and Sancia took her in her arms. "Come-

known fact, our learned folk ought presently to discover the true nature of the Yellow Death.

Meanwhile, the heat increased, so that we suffered far more discomfort than we ever felt in Florida.

Well, it was not until July that a ship cleared for New York and took us aboard as passengers.

She was the *St. Charles*, schooner, loaded with lumber, turpentine, pitch and oil. She carried square top-sails on her fore mast, six swivels and a stern chaser. Her captain Sidney Cass.

She was loaded to her gunwales and swam very low. She was a very bad sailor—a fat squat, waddling vessel that seemed to ask every sea to come aboard her, and every sea accepted.

Lord, how slow was this squattering hulk, and Lord, the smells aboard her! And the food; the water stank so that I thought even the rats must starve. Yet I was comforted to notice that they had not left us, which I was greatly inclined to do, and longed only to be set ashore but was ashamed to ask.

So it was waddle-waddle and slush-slush up the coast, making scarce more than steerage way, and the sea ever swelling up near enough to dip one's nose into.

She was like a hog wallowing in the wash made by his own fatness.

God saw that vessel and pitied it in His disgust, for during those weeks, and into New York harbor no more than a cupful of wind ever spilled over our sails.

It was seven A. M. on the first of August, 1694, that our masthead lifted Sandy Hook.

It was three in the afternoon when we hove to in the lower bay and signaled for a pilot.

Of a golden August evening, before a light sea-wind, we passed in through the Narrows under full sail and slowly proceeded up the harbor.

Never can I make it plain to anybody what poignant emotions possessed me as I came in view of the city of New York, and saw it in the westering sunshine with its windmills, its weather-vanes, its tall Dutch houses along the waterside and every window aflame with the sunset.

Lofty masts clustered here and there along the Wet Docks, the flag rippled from the fort, the arm of the Telegraph glittered.

Off the Half Moon battery we let go our anchor.

Ten minutes afterwards Evan Morgan and I

Dirck," says the captain, "show a stout heart, for I mean to return soon and dance at your wedding."

were tumbling into the pinnace and on our way to the dock.

NOW, by your leave, I shall presently relate to you something concerning the happiest period of my life, which came like a lovely calm between two storms—alas.

I would very gladly loiter over these pages to linger amid the charm and fragrance of those too few days. But I may not; and should be brief; because already, that far, faint cloud that was to breed tempests, and, as yet, unseen, and unsuspected, was waxing darker behind the world's outer edge, and only too soon would push up a distant, somber shape above the still horizon.

So quickly, then, to my brief gleam of sunshine.

When we landed from the *St. Charles*, schooner, we parted at the head of the water-stairs, Evan to seek a lodging in a Broad Street tavern, and I to give my sea-chest to a waterman, to carry to mine host of the Dark Ship whilst I ran to Captain Kidd's house on Great Queen Street.

Arriving there I beat upon the door with the great brass knocker. It was opened by a black, and, within the house, I heard somebody a-whistling of Bonny Dundee, and knew it was Captain Kidd because that was the tune he loved and often whistled, having been born in that town, and always considered Graham of Claverhouse a very great and good man.

I said to the astonished negro, "How are you, Sam?" and took his black hand and shook it heartily the while he rolled wild eyes at me, and I think scarce knew me, so thin and brown and changed was I.

All the while I heard Captain Kidd whistling away at the song made for the Viscount Dundee so long ago, and I gave hat and sword and shoulder-belt to the negro and walked lightly forward into the house.

Presently I stood by the door of the candle-lit room and saw him holding a skein of yarn with two hands while his lady wound it into a ball.

"Sam," said he, "who knocked?"

" 'Twas I, sir," said I.

At that he was on his feet and turned instantly, and I sprang to his arms like a long lost son.

We English do not kiss as do the Spanish and French, but clasp one another and lay head by head for an instant.

He said nothing, nor could I. Then I turned from him to his Sarah, and clasped her hand, to kiss it, but she drew me into her arms and kissed both my cheeks. A little while, then, I found voice to ask for Sancia.

"At the back door by the garden, a-watching for the new moon, Dirck," whispered Sarah Kidd, smiling through her tears. Then, seeing in my eyes how I was minded—"Dear son of ours to be," she whispered, "this is God's own mercy on the child. See that you do not too suddenly startle her lest you do her a harm."

"Damme, Dirck," said Captain Kidd, "must Sarah and I play two second fiddles to our Sancia's obligato evermore?"

But his wife laid her hand in mine, and Captain Kidd put both his arms around us.

"God bless us all," said he, "and it is a kind God I ask it of. So get you to your mistress, then—"

"Gently," whispered Sarah Kidd, "yet have a care to make some little stirring so she shall hear you ere you speak to her."

I kissed her hand and turned away through the hall and so out to the back door.

Below, I made out a shadowy form seated upon the very bottom of the stoop.

Hearing me moving, presently she asked who was there.

I did not reply.

"Is it you, Mother?" says she. And after a moment, as I stirred again, she rose from the stoop and stood on the grass, striving to see.

"Who is it?" she said in a voice which had in it the slightest quiver. And then "Is there *news?*" she asked excitedly.

"Sancia?" I said.

I went slowly down the brick steps to where she stood, and heard her whisper, "Oh, God. . . . Oh, God!" Then she took me fiercely in both arms and stared into my shadowy face.

"Dirck!" she stammered. "My Dirck. What have they done to you?" And catching me between her arms sobbing and laughing and making strange, sweet sounds with her lips against my face.

IT WAS a tall, lithe maid I clasped and not my little Sancia, shoulder high, but like a lovely stranger.

Only I knew the curly cloud o' hair and strove to see the shadowy features of the other Sancia, and saw them, exquisitely ennobled, and transfigured, by a riper beauty of which I never even dreamed that she concealed the germ.

Of love I cannot discourse. I love, yet I know not what love may truly be; nor how it begins, nor what are its causes and reasons.

When I left the Sancia I knew, I loved for the first time ever in my life. She was scarce sixteen, yet she knew it, and so did I.

And now I loved again this other Sancia, and yet still loved the first, and, somehow, I understood that I should love all ages, forms, and phases of her called Sancia as long as ever I lived on earth.

She took me by the hand and drew me in the door, and along the hallway where were candles burning. Here she laid her slender hands upon my shoulders to gaze upon this new lover which the years had so roughly wrought out of the old.

"So dark and worn you seem," whispered she, "—so painfully yet nobly, have you put on manhood. . . . Lean cheeks! . . . Grim youth. . . . Grim mouth . . . but sweet. . . . A boy's eyes that have known privation and a grown man's griefs. . . . My Dirck—what have they done to him!"

"Am I so altered, Sancia?"

"Dearer a thousand times than ever I could understand in my most lovesick moments. What is this white scar across your temple from hair to ear?"

"A flying splinter. . . . They sewed me up. . . . Is it ugly to look upon?"

"I love and adore it. It glimmers like a vein of white lightning. . . . But, oh, God, no more of swords if you love me—"

"You know it—and with all my soul."

"Yes, I know it. . . . And I knew I loved you—there in the falling rain—that day that Leisler died. . . . Then, and ever since, and now. . . . If you had died at sea, no other could have had me. . . . No. . . . I had been done for on this earth. . . . Will you kiss me, Dirck?"

As they laid their lips to the Virgin's robes in St. Augustine, so touched I Sancia's lips.

"Shall we go to my mother?" said she. So we joined hands and went in to the lighted room.

The memory of those golden autumn days is my precious heritage in this hour.

Never had I seen New York through eyes so enchanted. A new and rare beauty seemed descended upon city, fields, forests, and the flowing waters of sea and river.

In New York it was the gable ends of all Dutch houses which faced the street—although some few fine mansions like Captain Kidd's did not so face—and it did seem to me that a new era of neatness and cleanliness was arrived where all glass and brass glittered with the daily scouring given, footpaths were neatly paved and the streets, now, for the first time, cleaned by people paid to do it and not left for the pigs to clear of refuse.

Also, in some few streets posts were set and, in a lanthorne hung thereon, a candle burned all night long.

Many new houses had been builded since my departure on *The China Rose*. A road was cleared through Hanover Street and the waste land was to be made into a square and also called Hanover. In the Maiden's Path the footpath that ran beside the brook was now a street, and it was called Maiden Lane. Here, however, women still washed soiled linen in the little brook.

Everybody was discussing the improvements and planning others.

There was great talk of tearing down the city wall and the stone points or bastions at Broadway and William Street, and building a line of strong fortifications across the island on the northward.

Ground had been broken in the spring for the new English church, and it was near built and finished, and the Dutch church on Garden Street was in use already. Also, plans had been made to fill in beyond Great Queen Street and make new streets toward the East River.

As for commerce, I was told that forty square-rigged vessels and more than sixty sloops were entered at the Custom House at one time.

Now, concerning my own small dwelling on Great Queen Street, I discovered how dusty and musty it had become during my captivity, when I fetched the key from Captain Kidd's where I had deposited it.

But a High Dutch girl came from the Out-Ward to clean and set it to rights, and very quickly I was made comfortable.

NOW, when Captain Kidd and Sancia had wrote letters to me while I was a prisoner of the Spaniards, in St. Augustine, there was never a word in their letters concerning my share in the prizes taken by *The China Rose;* and I supposed their silence was for this reason—that they did not wish to arouse the cupidity of the Dons so that they might hold me for a ransom.

This turned out to be the case, for the day after I arrived, Mr. Emott, the lawyer, waited on me with documents from the Admiralty Court lately holden in New York and by these I learned that I had acquired a real fortune which was no less than twenty thousand sterling in value.

This turned out to be the case.

Now it seems strange, that this great fortune neither elated me, nor made me thrifty, nor penurious, nor yet incited me to vain expenses.

No. My needs were few, my small house sufficient, and the only notice I took of my fortune was to safely invest it through Mr. Emott and Captain Kidd against the time when I should come to marry Sancia.

Sancia, now, was nearly nineteen years old. I was impatient to marry her, and she very sweetly confessed her desire for a speedy wedding.

But there had arisen an obstacle, and it was this:

Our damned governor, Colonel Fletcher, who had come out to govern us, was a very zealot and fanatic in the cause of the English Church, and meant to force all in New York to worship in that creed only, and also was arrogant against all Papists and Lutherans, or Dutch—indeed, against any who did not conform to the creed of the Established Church of England. Which was ungrateful and tyrannical because until he built the English chapel in the Fort, the Dutch Church afforded him hospitality, and the English services were carried out there.

The Church of England was my faith and Sancia's but here came the obstacle.

This fat, noisy, over-fed and profligate governor, since he had come to New York in 1692, had become a kind of petty tyrant. He was selfish and corrupt, and took bribes, and corrupted the Government officials who served under him. Everything was done by intrigue and favor, and this fellow Fletcher could make or break merchants and sea captains by stopping their ships in the bay and causing delays and damages and extortions through customs officials and port authorities.

Furthermore, he was shameless in the countenance he gave to captains who were known pirates, and who carried rich presents to him, and so openly that Tom Tew visited him in his mansion and dined often at his table.

Well, with all this scandalous behavior, our governor as I say, was a very fanatic, in behalf of the English Church, and swore he would build a great church at the head of Wall Street and call it Trinity Church, which he did—and have laws passed that all in New York should worship there or pack up and go elsewhere.

Now, his noisy and convivial friendship he forced upon Captain Kidd, and caressed and made much of him, for my captain was a gentleman and wealthy, and a citizen of such consequences that the town had voted him a gift of money for to acknowledge his services to the City of New York.

When Governor Fletcher learned that Sancia was plighted to me, and that Captain Kidd desired to retire from business and had designed me to succeed him and carry on his sea trade, instantly he declared that my marriage with Sancia should be solemnized not in the tiny Fort Chapel—but in the new Trinity Church as soon ever as it was finished and consecrated, and that the occasion should be a grand and splendid one where the governor and his lady and all officials of the province and the city and all folk of fashion and consequences should attend.

I know that this fellow cared not a clipped farthing for Sancia or for me, but he saw occasion for a great official propaganda in that the first marriage ceremony in Trinity Church should have so splendid and official a setting.

Well, damn him, I would have bid him mind his own affairs and refrain from thrusting his snout into mine, only for Captain Kidd's sake I forebore after taking counsel with Sarah and Sancia.

No, it would not do to antagonize this zealot and tyrant if Captain Kidd's ships were to trade upon the seas under my future supervision, or he might stop them in the bay and begin a confusion that would surely cause our trade a damage that might ruin us both.

So, in family conference, it was decided to await the charter, and the finishing and consecration of Trinity Church which, I have said, was being builded upon that plot of land known as The King's Farm, which lay at the head of Wall Street and consisted of a garden, an orchard, a pasturage for cattle, and that pretty, triangular graveyard in which my dear parents rested.

This, then, is why I did not marry Sancia when she was nineteen, because of consideration for Captain Kidd, and the affection and tender respect I bore him, and which I bear his memory to this hour.

Well, the fat governor had his way, and sorry I am that I kicked not his snout out of rooting among my private affairs. For it had been better for Captain Kidd and for me to have made this man a declared enemy, and so, perhaps, unveil and discover others who never, never should have been trusted by us.

Had this been done, and the governor become an avowed enemy to Captain Kidd, and stopping his ships in the bay, the captain must have quit the sea trade and sold out, and so never would have made his voyage to England and fallen into the toils of Robert Livingston and the Lords of Trade, and that miserable monarch William the Third.

Well, my pen again flies too swiftly, so let me a little yet enjoy the golden tide of that soft autumn weather, and remember those enchanted days with Sancia, and with Captain Kidd and Sarah and the baby Elizabeth, now nearly two years old—a lovely little thing and mirror of her charming mother.

I was deep and passionately in love. Love flamed in my heart like the fiery October foliage which made a scarlet and crimson conflagration of all our maple wood lands. And never have I seen such beauty as was Sancia's.

As for Captain Kidd and his dear lady, they adored the baby Betty, and he was always whistling Bonny Dundee.

Riel de Lanois and Maddaleen often dined with us. They were affianced and hotly in love, and he was instructing her in the science of medicine. They were to wed in the coming spring in the Huguenot Church, and members of his family were to come from France to be present.

By day we walked, or made pleasure parties on the water, or lingered in the garden among ripe grapes and apples, or sat together in the dim parlor whilst Sancia played upon the spinet and sang songs made long ago in England.

With Captain Kidd I was often in company and consultation.

I remember one day when we were closeted in his chamber to consult concerning his business which I was to carry on after he returned from England.

He said: "I shall sail soon, now, and make an end of this matter which requires my personal presence in London. God knows I do not desire to leave Sarah and the baby to you and Sancia. No! But it is better to finish and be done with vexations and all the multitude of cares which beset all men who trade by sea and land—"

HE SMILED upon me, "All these perplexities and miseries I bequeath to you, Dirck," said he, "and shall hereafter sit at my ease with one arm around Sarah and t'other about Betty, and have my pipe and my Madeira, and whistle Bonny Dundee—"

We both laughed.

"No man hath a better right to his ease," said I.

"Well," says he, "I am in the prime of life and have labored hard since early youth to gain a fortune honestly. And have gained it so. And lately bought me a silver table service. Which," says he, "is not so bad for a poor Scot from Dundee. Yet, I will say this, I have ever loved a good ship and the sea called to me in my cradle, and my trade has been to my liking, Dirck. I hope it will be so to yours."

"It will. I love the sea."

He nodded, whistled his Dundee air, and then:

"There be a lousy lot on the high seas, too." he said, bluntly.

"Pirates a-plenty, you mean sir?"

"I do. And in port as well as at sea. And it is said that England is coming rapidly to the point where she will no longer tolerate these gentry who take any flag even off Sandy Hook—here, at our very doors and under our proper noses.

"Dirck, the scandal of it is become serious. In London they speak of New York City as 'The Pirate's Nest,' and declare that Madagascar is empty of 'em because all have come to New York."

"Is it true," said I, "that our governor hath flagrant commerce with these pirates?"

"Why, yes," says he, "and it is common knowledge that he encourages and protects them. When he issues commissions for sea captains to raise crews and act as privateers against the French, his tongue is in his cheek and his weather eye winks.

"He hath commissioned Coates and Hore and Tew."

"I heard he is on gay terms with Thomas Tew," said I.

"He is. They revel together. And he has this pirate at his own table to dine with his lady and other respectable persons. He seems infatuated with Tew; says he is agreeable and companionable and a remarkable man of marvelous information, memory, and understanding."

I was both shocked and angry and ashamed that the Governor of New York should so humiliate my city of New York.

"Sir," said I, "shall I find Mr. Tew some pleasant evening at the Dark Ship and quarrel with him?"

"To what point?"

"My sword-point, sir."

"No, Dirck. If you ran him through, no ship of mine or yours but would be stopped in the river. I tell you that our governor dotes on Tommy Tew, takes him to drive in his coach and six, says he desires to convert him to the Established Church—"

"What!" I exclaimed.

"Certainly. I myself heard him say that it was 'in his heart to convert Tew from the error of his ways, to make him sober, and to reclaim him from his vile habit of swearing—' "

The monstrous iniquity of this governor of ours enraged me, but Captain Kidd took it more coolly "For," says he, "I have lived longer than you, Dirck, and have learned that a knight errant accomplishes little save to tickle his own vanity, but that great abuses are stopped and abolished only when the conscience of the community is aroused."

"Has New York no conscience then?" I asked hotly.

"Oh, yes. Many begin to murmur." He laughed. "The—governor is deaf, but others with soiled fingers hear the growling."

"You mean gentlemen who have traded with the Red Sea gentry?"

"Aye," he smiled.

"Philipse? Pell? Livingston?"

He laughed very heartily, "Bob Livingston, too. You remember he came to me that day, and I would have none of his schemes? Yet now these same growlings and murmurings in New York, and the rumblings that come to us from England, have most miraculously altered the opinions of Mr. Livingston and Mr. Pell and Colonel Philipse. And now they will have no more commerce with Captain Tew and his like, so that I fear when Tommy Tew sails out o' Sandy Hook, he, having no more business through Mr. Livingston, and Mr. Pell, and Colonel Philipse, must starve or sail *On The Account*, and openly to take any flag."

"You think this, sir?"

"I do. What other is left him but to show the death's head and crossed bones? And it will be the same for John Ireland, and Captain Maze, and Tom Wake. They will stand for the Red Sea and there fly the black ensign in my opinion, as Bob Culliford has done, and Teach, and many another whom I knew once as honest folk but are now declared pirates."

There was a silence. He smoked his pipe and sipped his toddy, his handsome blue eyes dreaming, and the faint scowl brooding between his brows. Then:

"This vast scandal of piracy cannot endure forever," said he, "and England knows it. She shall put a stop to it at no distant day. Never have American waters so swarmed with pirates, never have these coasts and harbors been so unsafe. As for the Spanish Main, and the Red Sea, both are lousy with corsairs. And England cannot choose but stop them. Because the patience of the Great Mogul will not endure forever, and one day, when his fleet is again plundered, he will turn on the East India Company, and on all English and French factories in India, and slay the factors, and every European, and carry his vengeance so bloodily and so far that England herself may tremble. Who knows? Even the cornered rat will fight."

"Why," said I, "does not England send her frigates to end this business?"

"She hath done so. They cruise but discover no pirates, or, when they do, the pirates outsail 'em and escape. No, the warships know not how to take these pirates, or where to seek them, for that matter, or even when to attempt them. Also, this war with France uses all England's ships so she cannot spare any to give us countenance against Monseer Frontenac."

WELL, thus we talked of this and that, and concerning his voyage which he so soon must make, and how it both vexed and saddened him that he must leave his wife and baby and this pleasant house by the water to take ship to England.

"God only knows how soon I shall again return," he said, "but God grant it be in time for your wedding with our Sancia."

"We shall not wed until you return," said I. "And that's flat."

He laughed, rose and laid his kind, firm hand upon my shoulder.

"Wait not on me for your happiness," he said. "Life is brief, take joy when offered, Dirck. . . . . Well, then, I shall return to dance at your wedding—dear lad, and loyal. Count on it by God's grace."

He walked about the room, refilling his long clay pipe and whistling Bonny Dundee.

"Lord," says he, staring out o' the window across the water—"to think I was born in Dundee in '54 and am forty at this hour. I was thirty-five and full sea captain when I took my captured ship under Hewetson, and fought the Frenchman, gun for gun and all day long for two whole days at Marie-galante and St. Martin's. Lord, a-mercy, but time flies like scud in a nor-easter. A whiff of spindrift, and it is ended. . . . That's life, Dirck. . . . The rainbow you see on a bubble. . . . And, when it breaks, why that's death, my lad."

Sarah came into the room and he turned and caught her in his arms and gazed at her in the gay and bonnie way he had—a kindness full o' mischief, and his blue eyes like a boy who loves but plagues you.

"That's not so bad, is it, sweetheart," says he, "—not for a poor Scottish lad out o' Dundee town and become a gentleman free-holder of New York City in forty years from the cradle—" he gave her a kiss— "with a snug fortune, invested and land and housen," says he, "and three hundred dollars' worth o' silver service plate—and a lovely baby girl and a wife to which no other in all New York compares for goodness and beauty—"

"A fiddlestick," cried Sarah, blushing, and laughing. "Will you have done with your pranks, William?"

He held her fast and kissed her ears and her piquant nose.

"Dirck," she begged, "—a rescue."

"He's too wise," quoth Captain Kidd, "—having a saucy baggage of his own to reckon with. . . . Well then, sweetheart, I release you, but you will bewail me when I sail. . . ."

She took his pipe from him and filled it for him, and ran lightly to fetch a coal from the nursery where a fire burned, whilst Betty took her beauty nap of an October afternoon.

Captain Kidd looked at me, and there seemed an odd shadow in his clear eyes.

"Lord," said he under his breath, "if I am happier than I ought to be, and beyond my poor merits, I pray God's kind indulgence for me and mine."

I said, "No, you are an upright, good, and honorable man. What is yours in this hour is your just due, sir."

He shook his head. "I am a great sinner," says he.

"All are born so," said I, "—only by Christ's devotion are we offered grace."

After a silence, "I have," said he, "wronged no man or woman, knowingly. I have striven to deal honestly in trade. But this happiness is beyond such meager merits. . . . May God avert all evil from those under this roof and in this hour. Amen."

CAPTAIN KIDD sailed for England late in October, taking passage on a great ship bound thither.

Sarah wept, and Sancia took her in her slender arms and cradled her.

As for me I went to the water-stairs and saw him aboard the long-boat.

"Come, Dirck," says he, "show a stout heart, my lad. For I mean to return very soon and dance at your wedding."

I stood at the foot of the slippery, weed-grown stairs and held to his hand as though I could not endure to let him go. He, also, seemed to feel the parting, and somberly, as though not too certain of the future.

"Sir," said I, "have a care when you are in London, for Robert Livingston is there, and he is a man I never shall trust."

"Why?" says he. "What has Bob Livingston to do with me, or I with him?"

"I know not. Once he came to you with Pell and Philipse to urge his dirty schemes. Have a care o' that man, sir. I saw poor Leisler hanged, and Milbourne; and I heard Milbourne on the gallows curse Livingston and promise to impeach him for murder before God's own tribunal. Look, sir, what hath happened today. For the blot is removed from Captain Leisler's name, and Milbourne's; and their property is returned to their widows and children, and they both are officially cleansed of the charge of treason.

"But of what avail is this tardy justice to poor Leisler who died upon the scaffold? . . . And who sent him thither? . . . So, I shall tell you, sir, beware of Robert Livingston, for he proclaims aloud that you are an honest man and that when he is in need of such he knows where to lay a hand on him."

"To what purpose?" asked Captain Kidd, perplexed.

"Damnation, sir—to do a rogue's work," I said. "Can it be better done than by honest men."

"I do not a rogue's work for anybody," said he, smiling, "so, quiet your alarms dear lad, and bid me God speed and a pleasant voyage, for the tide waits for no man, and Christ alone subdued the waters."

We clasped hands, he stepped aboard the long-boat, the crew tossed their oars in salute, then dipped them all together and pulled smartly for the great ship which lay off Broad Street.

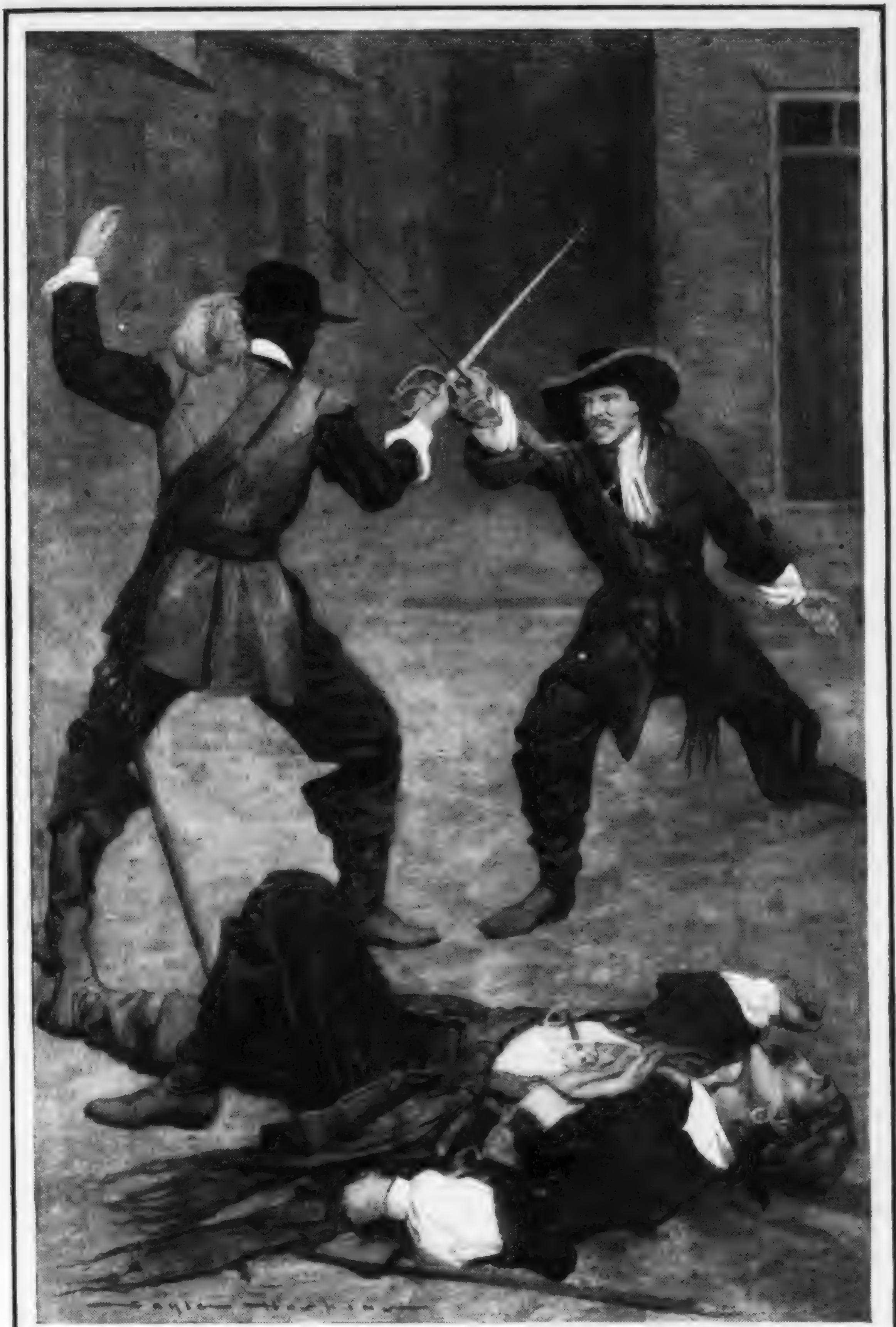
I went back to the house to play with Betty and cheer Sarah and Sancia, but our supper was mournful, do what I could to liven it, and by early candlelight both Sarah and Sancia bade me good night, saying that they were for bed.

But I was wakeful and restless and disturbed—I know not why—and put on my shoulder-belt and hat and walked out in no amiable mood.

Stars were shining, and a winy odor of ripe apples in the keen evening air, but the stink of the canal in Broad Street mended that, and presently soured me, also, so that when I came to The Pie Woman's Lane, and an officer came out of it, I showed him no politeness nor gave way, but went straight on so he was obliged to halt in the runnel and give me room.

As I passed him, I looked at him, and saw he was Malloch Strawn, and he also knew me, too, in that instant, and put out his hand and shoved me to one side.

"Your betters first," said he, "and learn hereafter to stand back when an officer of His



As Wake fell, raling and coughing, I snatched his sword, leaving mine transfixing him—for there was not an instant to drag it out—and turned to parry Mallach's furious lunge.

Majesty's forces does you the honor to pass before you."

I tell you that my breath utterly forsook me, and I had no voice to utter a sound. So judge you, then, if this quarrel was of my proper devising.

Mr. Strawn, when he had put me aside and passed me, halted, and turned to face me again.

"Well," said he, "you carried it with a high hand, Mr. Hazlett—to take your pick for marriage and hand your mistress to De Lanois."

At that my voice returned and I became master of myself and calm.

"Malloch," said I, "Riel de Lanois would kill you if I tell him what you say concerning Maddaleen Wyck. Why do you push a quarrel with me? It's so easy to run you through that I do not desire to do so. No! So go back to your Fort. God knows you have soldiers enough now to entertain you with bottle, cards, or swords and need not come a-seeking trouble among peaceful folk to provoke them."

"Have I provoked you?" said he.

"No, you have disgusted me. But you have provoked my sword-arm. So pass your way in God's name or you may vex my sword, too."

"Well," says he, coolly, "my own point is a tender one and itches in its sheath."

"You are a fool," said I. "Pass on."

"Oh," said he, "maybe not so great a fool as that. What did you say to Sancia Caradac to poison her against me?"

"Are you mad, Malloch?"

"Not so mad. No! . . . But, by God, though you lay in a Spanish prison for nearly three years, and all believed you dead, I could not obtain one word of your inamorata. No. Nor would she use me with common civility. Which is why I know well that you poisoned her against me and be damned to you."

"Pass on," said I, choking back my rage.

"No," said he, "I have been at some pains to find you, and now that I have found you I mean to punish you."

"Oh, so you have been following me?"

"I have had you followed."

God knows how I controlled my fury. I I asked him, calmly, if he had employed others to spy on me.

Even as I spoke he drew his sword, yet, *something*, I know not what, made me cast a glance behind me even as I drew, and I saw a man run out at me, from The Pie Woman's Lane, and caught the glimmer of his naked sword.

Between this fellow and Malloch was I caught in an instant, and the wall too distant, to shelter my back.

I know not why I did as I did, for there was no time for my wits to work—not a second for thought or hesitation—and I turned like a cat under Malloch's thrust and sprang right into the other's face, fending and catching his sword and forcing it straight up so that the blade pricked toward the high stars. Then, in a flash, I had shortened my arm and drove my point through his throat so that the hilt and guard crashed against his chest.

As he fell, raling and coughing, I snatched his sword from his hand, leaving my own transfixing him—for there was not an instant to drag it out—and turned to parry Malloch's furious lunge and engage his blade and beat it about, this way and that.

"Murderer," I panted, "I know you now who have paid Tom Wake to use his dagger on my defenseless back. Well, he is paid, is he not? . . . *I* paid him. Yonder he lies in The Pie Woman's Lane with my sword through his throat. Go ask him if he is paid for his hire."

Malloch, all the while was at me like a fury, and I understood very quickly that he had profited by my years of absence, for his was now an agile, lithe, and dangerous blade, and kept me busy and at my wit's end to save my skin.

IN THAT deserted lane there was nobody to hear or see us or interfere, and the only light was starlight.

I understood, now, that Malloch had long planned to do my business for me by any means, fair or foul; and I remembered his threat concerning Sancia, and knew that, if I died, this night in The Pie Woman's Lane, he never would leave Sancia in peace. I *knew* it."

We were breathing heavily now, and were fencing and maneuvering for an advantage and with a catlike delicacy and caution. Starlight played and glittered over our blades, with now and again a brighter spark as they clashed.

"Malloch," said I, in a low voice, and I saw he heard me— "if you lived as long as any devil in hell you never could obtain a single word of Sancia. . . . And you shall live that long—in hell—"

Swift as a star ray glinting along his blade my sword darted and glimmered like lightning as the stroke passed on through him—every inch of shining steel—till his falling body quenched the last faint spark.

Where he lay, in the runnel of The Pie Woman's Lane I went and looked down upon him, and saw he was dead, and Tom Wake's rapier through his heart.

I left that dishonored sword transfixing this dishonored man and went back to where the pirate, Wake, lay, and out of his beastly body I drew my decent blade, and shuddered as I wiped it to think what swine it slew.

So wrought up was I, and still all of a fever, and not yet gone cold, that I fell to whistling Bonnie Dundee as I walked on out of that starlit lane and on through dark streets until I came to the waterside and Great Queen Street; and so to my own house.

But, oh, God, when I had undressed and

cleansed me, and was stretched upon my bed, of a sudden I went cold of it all, and trembled and fell a-weeping like a very school boy on my pillow. So fearful a thing it is to slay a man in anger. And though I had seen men die, never before had I killed a human being. And this night had slain two.

I kept my own counsel. There was noise enough in New York concerning the matter, but it seemed a plain problem for any coroner—what with Tom Wake's Spanish sword hilt deep in Malloch Strawn, and both in the same pickle and lying in the same lane. That was an easy inquest and a swift verdict—a fatal brawl in The Pie Woman's Lane. And it seemed that both had been carousing aboard Wake's ship which lay in the Wet Docks moored under the guns of the *Stadt-huis* battery. Also both had been seen drinking together at The Dark Ship and disputing over Lysbet, the tall, thin taproom wench.

As for me, this horrid business fair sickened me so that I kept my room pretending some slight disorder. And I prayed a great deal and read the Gospels. But Riel came one day—urged by Sancia—and as soon as he entered into my room where I lay he gave me a look, and I knew that he knew.

So to him I confessed me, and he said very coolly that they had their deserts and that I need feel no pangs. . . . But when I heard the dead march sounding from the Fort—God! I could scarce endure it.

WELL, Riel never left me during those remorseful days, and finally his reason and sense and wisdom prevailed. I put away the horror of it and the haunting fear of blood-guilt and that awful dread of a Divine and wrathful judgment. Because, after all, as Riel says, a man is a pitiable fool who had rather be slain than slay in his just and proper defense. And when I also came to that conclusion I began to mend. Yet, chiefest I dreaded to tell Sancia, and wondered whether I should, and asked Riel his opinion.

He replied that a man is also a fool who must blabb out to wife or mistress what he is too weak to contain within himself alone.

Said he, "Let her not share this burden which must distress her to no purpose. To lighten one's burden at another's expense is the way of the weak. The strong man shoulders trouble in silence."

So, to Sancia, I made no mention of the affair, nor did she concern herself with it except innocently to warn me against taverns and brawling, and to praise the virtues of domesticity.

But one day in mid-November passing by the shipyard below Maiden Lane, I saw Captain Tew and John Ireland, arm in arm, and returning from *Vendue* aboard the *Susanna* which had been Wake's ship.

When Tew saw me he dropped John Ireland's arm and came across the street and took mine.

"Sir Cockerel," says he, bursting with evil mirth, "had the crowner known you as I do, then there had been a truer verdict at the crowner's quest."

"What do you say?" said I coolly.

"Ah," said he, "that's the point. I say *nothing*. A sharp point, Sir Cockerel, sharp as your own point—" He burst out laughing. "Tom Maze and Tom Wake. Two Toms—Tom-tiddle and Tiddle-tom. One in the Red Sea, and t'other in hell. And be damned to him. I told him you'd pay him for that dagger stroke."

"What stroke was that, Mr. Tew?"

At that he roared and clapped my back and shoulder, which madded me. But for Captain Kidd's sake I endured this rogue who had become our governor's boon companion.

HE WAS all in rich velvet of a bright orange hue, and the long plumes on his black beaver hat were orange, and his shoulder-belt bandoleer, and pistol-sash were of heavy cloth of gold. In his lop ears great hoops of gold set with yellow sapphires glittered; on his hairy hands blazed gems of every color, his pistols were damascened in gold and so were the hilts of sword and also dagger. As for his boots of soft fawn color, they were made in a strange and forgotten fashion such as prevailed in the reign of King Charles the First. And on them were gold buckles and gold spurs chained with golden links.

"Sir Cockerel," says he, halting and detaining me, "some years ago I asked you to sign with me. And I said to you then that you should have the first"—he leered at me—"*lawful* prize which we took on the high seas."

"I remember, Captain Tew."

"Well, then," says he. "I offer you better on this day. I have bought Tom Wake's ship. Sign and sail in my company and you shall command the *Susanna*."

I laughed, "In what trade, Captain? Logwood?"

"The Malabar—niggers, ivory, gums, spices, silks, gold bars and silver." He clapped me on the shoulder. "Heart of oak," he cried, "will you make one o' three of us—and John Ireland is the other?"

"Does Mr. Pell outfit you?"

At that his features became malignant and he cursed horribly:

"No, nor Skinflint Philipse neither. And I would I knew what that stiff and secret Livingston is about in London. Who will engage in no more commerce with us. And what does he do in London, yonder where his friends, the Lords o' Trade, dine him and wine him, and the king sends for him—so they say"—he made me an impudent grimace—"to take measures to suppress those horrid pirates which, some pretend still sail his Majesty's sacred ocean—"

He roared with laughter, clapped me by the shoulder, "Sleep on it, Sir Cockerel. I know you for a rare one, and I wanted you when you were a stripling and I want you now—"

"Then you shall have my answer now, Mr. Tew," said I, "and it is this: If ever again I take to the sea, then I shall look for you; and if ever I discover you, I shall lay you aboard . . . Do you understand?"

"By God," says he, "if I cannot win you, then, nevertheless—come aboard, Sir Cockerel."

"I pray God I may, Mr. Tew."

We faced each other, and, for a moment, I thought he meant to draw on me. But instead, he thrust forth his great bejewelled and murderous hand and grasped mine.

"Visit me as you choose, Sir Cockerel," he cried, "only do not neglect me if you go to sea again."

"If I go to sea again I shall not neglect you, Captain Tew," said I politely.

So he went back across the street, laughing and slapping his sword, where John Ireland awaited him with folded arms and lounging against a tree.

This happened in November. By the end of the month Tew sailed with John Ireland never again to show any ensign but the bones; never again to enter in Sandy Hook and drop his anchor off the city of New York.

When he departed, the luck of Governor Fletcher departed aboard *The Amity*, also; for the scandal of this pirate's friendship had reached the King in London, and the Admiralty, and the Lords of Trade. And already that fox, Robert Livingston, had sniffed the change of wind and was leaping, fawning, and caressing those who had made a Governor out of Colonel Fletcher, and who could unmake him and break him if they would.

Yet that great, red-faced, guzzling ass seemed to believe he had been appointed Governor of New York for life. There was no end to his impudence and his traffic *On The Account;* and he dined and wined the great and the suspected alike; and drove his coach and six all over the city. But the dust he raised could not conceal the business he was about, and before the winter ended with February, ships out of England bore gossip and rumors from London which set such secret folk as Mr. Philipse and Mr. Pell a-thinking. Our jackass Governor, however, reveled on, or, hearing that the French were fighting near Schenectady, he ran to Albany with a regiment—and so swiftly that the astonished Iroquois gave him the name of *Kayanquirago*, the Great Swift Arrow—which so tickled his ribs that he never was done a-talking of it, though he burned not a single cartridge in the Mohawk country.

It was about this time, too, that he lost his temper when attempting to bully the House concerning the bill for the establishment of a ministry, and the Assembly refused the council and defied the governor.

So furious was our fat governor that he summoned the House and gave it a scolding.

"You have shown a great deal of stiffness," says he, "and you take upon you airs as if you were dictators. I sent you an amendment of three or four words which you denied. I must tell you that it seems very unmannerly. There never was an amendment yet but what you rejected. It is a sign of stubborn ill-temper.

"If you think that none can serve without your collation, you are mistaken. I have the power of suspending any minister. Whilst I stay in the Government I will take care that neither heresy, sedition, schism, nor rebellion be preached . . . nor vice nor profanity encouraged. *It is my endeavor to lead a virtuous and pious life, and to set a good example.* Gentlemen, I shall say no more at present but that you withdraw to your private affairs."

Thus spoke the bigot and zealot in amazing and monstrous hypocrisy.

I write him down out of his own mouth—not that this man was my enemy—and, indeed, his lady and her daughters were amiable and agreeable—but because you should know how it was that through the doings of Governor Fletcher our city of New York came into such disrepute that it roused even the King to make an end of these abuses.

And, oh and alas, that the instrument chosen should have been my dear and honored friend, Captain William Kidd.

ONE snowy day in February when I was sitting with Sancia in the parlor of Captain Kidd's house and casting up household accounts between us, the drums came through the streets of the city.

We went to the window and heard a sergeant from the garrison calling for volunteers to go to Albany against the French and Count Frontenac.

But I durst not say I desired to go because Sancia caught me fiercely by the sleeve and gave me so stormy a look that I had no courage left, and went back to my chair and took up the accounts again.

When we had cast up everything, and all was clear, Sancia went away to read them to Sarah who, poor, sweet lady, was listening to Betty a-conning her horn book which the nurse was teaching her.

I went again to the window and could still hear the drums through the falling snow.

And it was thus that our governor recruited the regiment which he carried so nimbly to Albany—and by water, too, for the river was open—which is why he arrived there so swiftly and astonished the Iroquois.

When Sancia returned she drew me to a great armchair by the fire, and came onto my knees, and, so resting, laid her cheek to mine.

"Dirck," said she, "I am troubled."

"In what manner, sweetheart?"

"Well, I have not told you—but three letters have arrived from Father. I read them to Mother, and they caused us anxiety."

"Has he met with mischance?"

"He has met with Mr. Livingston."

After a silence I asked her if I might know something of what Captain Kidd had written.

So she told me that he had encountered Mr. Livingston in London, that Livingston had sent several times for him to come to his lodgings, that finally he had gone thither; and there had found an affable and elegant gentleman, one, Lord Bellomont, and had dined in his company, with Mr. Livingston.

"Who this Lord Bellomont may be," said Sancia, "Father knows not, but suspects from words dropped, that there is talk of his following Fletcher as Governor of New York some day. And Mother and I are cautioned not to say such a thing, or even to mention Lord Bellomont's name save only to you."

"Why does this worry your mother?" I asked.

"I'll tell you, Dirck. This Lord Bellomont gave a dinner in London, to Sir Edward Russell who is first Lord of the Admiralty. To this same dinner Father was asked, and thought it not prudent to decline. And there met Sir John Somers, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal; and the Duke of Shrewsbury, Secretary of State, and the Earl of Romney.

"And, Dirck, the talk at table, and after, was all of the sea, and pirates and piracy and of the disgrace of New York which so wantonly harbors known pirates who pretend to commissions and letters of reprisal but who engage in the Red Sea traffic and sail *On The Account* with all the impudence in the world."

"Well," said I, "what has Captain Kidd to do with these things?"

"He writes that he is uneasy because Colonel Livingston so loudly proclaims him an honest and reliable sea captain of great experiment and proven courage. And Livingston tells these noble lords that if they desire information concerning pirates, and their rendezvous, and in what seas to seek them, then there is nobody to enlighten them compared to Father and who has sailed all seas and who has met and known these folk afloat and ashore.

"Which as I tell you, hath troubled Father, and he fears that some of these great folk may solicit his aid if, as it is rumored, the King desires to fit out a ship to search for and take these pirates in their own haunts."

"Your father," said I, "will never do that. When he returns to New York he will go to sea no more. No, not for any honors or any money offered. So why should he be uneasy?"

"Colonel Livingston is a scheming and secret man, and has the ears of great folks."

"I know," said I, "but what of that?"

SANCIA shook her head, "Ask not me, dearest. I only tell you what I have read in Father's letters to Mother, that he is uneasy, and desires to despatch his business in London and sail for home on the first ship."

This troubled me, though I would not admit as much to Sancia.

But, thinking on it as I lay abed that night, I wondered why these great folk in London had so pressed their attentions on a simple Scottish sea captain, and why Mr. Livingston had so caressed and made much of a man who, but a few years ago, had rejected with good-humored contempt his offer to make a fifth in a scheme to become rich out of the same riches of which pirates robbed honest men.

I remembered that Livingston had said, then, that when he had use for an honest sea captain he knew where to find him.

Still, what could Livingston do if Captain Kidd refused any commission to lead an expedition against these pirates? Nothing.

So that was all there was to it. And yet I lay awake, thinking, and deeply conscious of my distrust of this man, Robert Livingston, this dark, arrogant, dour gentleman who was a gentleman. But his black hat and his black cloak seemed to fall across my world like the very shadow of Apolyon.

TO BE CONTINUED

Prize Contest Award

FIRST Prize, of ten dollars, for the best letter in EVERYBODY'S contest, "I'd Like to Know Why," has been awarded to Miss Emily V. Balassi, 1329 Prospect Avenue, Brooklyn, New York. The Second Prize, of five dollars, went to Miss Annette M. Snapper, Colonial Lodge, Roseberry Place, Forest Hills, New York. The first prize winner asked: "Why do People Get the Blues?" The second, "Why is it that so many people cannot see a young person happy, light of heart, trusting in God, sure that tomorrow will be as bright as today, without thrusting in some bitterness and doubt and fear that has come to them through the crowded and often misspent years?" The prizes were awarded to the two letters which, in the opinion of the judges, most clearly and intelligently indicated answers that would be of interest to the greatest number of EVERYBODY'S readers.

The World *as a* Blind Man Sees It

When visual images are no longer possible, impressions from hearing, temperature, smell and touch may be cultivated to replace them. Why you should never do anything for a blind man that he can learn to do for himself

by Charles Magee Adams

IT WAS Saturday afternoon and spring had come to Main Street. The sun had an intimate warmth that made the cool spots under the store awnings and the fickle river breeze welcome. Children romped gleefully between groups of shoppers who had paused to ask how the folks were. In the flat above the jewelry store a woman was singing "A Smile Goes a Long, Long Way" as if she meant it, and the boy dragging the freezer of ice cream off the truck with its engine lisping lazily at the curb was whistling the tune. An auction of second-hand furniture was going on in front of the store across the street, the sing-song of the auctioneer rising to a satisfied crescendo with "Sold!" The sweetish sharp smell drifting out of the open drug store door was more distinct than usual. Some one was banging a cleaver against the block in the butcher shop, and on the street the tar in the new patches was soft under foot.

Mr. Adams is able to make you understand the blind man's point of view as he knows it from living for twenty years in total darkness. His own experience is unique. When a gunshot wound destroyed his sight at the age of eleven, he continued as a student in grade and high schools, and later graduated from Ohio State University. He had his text books read aloud to him and took his examinations orally or on the typewriter. Mr. Adams has never asked any special favors because of his disability. Besides editing a newspaper in his home town, Milford, Ohio, he has been a contributor to some sixty magazines.

Will you read this bit of description again, analyzing it to determine definitely whether or not it gives you a satisfactory sense of warmth and good cheer? If you are an average observer, and the great bulk of people are, it will. But if your perceptions have been sharpened by some professional training, say in one of the arts or in writing, you will discover that it lacks something—visual appeal, or things seen. It does. This bit of description is my attempt to set down how Main Street appeared to me on a recent spring Saturday afternoon. And I have been blind nearly twenty-one years. But whether you detect the lack or not you have already taken a long first step toward the answer to a frequent question—how does the world look to a blind man?

Everyone endowed with normal sight has asked this question at some time or other, and it is a natural question. Sight is such a vitally useful and important sense that it is difficult, not to say impossible, for the seeing to conceive of life without it. Work, play, even the contacts of friendship depend on and are bound up with it so intimately that a world which cannot be seen must indeed seem a strange place. But fortunately there is nothing mysterious or incomprehensible about it.

Turn back once more to the description with which this article opens and see how the thing works out. We agreed that this description lacked visual appeal, things seen. If you check it over line by line you will find it does not contain a single detail based on the use of sight. Yet I doubt very much if you were aware of this when you read it over for the first time.

The truth is the difference between the impression a blind man gets of a thing and the impression a seeing man gets is far less vast than the seeing believe. The chief reason it seems so vast is because the seeing make such constant use of sight even when this is not actually necessary. A friend of mine, for example, told me he could not understand how I enjoyed smoking because to him the principal pleasure in it was watching the rings and plumes of smoke as they rose from his pipe or cigaret. You can find a score of similar details in your own daily life.

Then how do the blind get their impression of things and places? Not by some miraculous power the seeing do not possess. It has been stated so often and believed in so many quarters that the blind are endowed with a "sixth" or "obstacle" or other mysterious sense through which in some way they are made aware of unseen objects. But there are absolutely no facts to support this statement. On the contrary, it can be demonstrated with scientific accuracy that what seems to be such a sense is merely one or another of the remaining normal senses used to a degree not necessary in the seeing.

Neither do the blind man's impressions consist of a series of mental pictures. This statement, too, is made repeatedly and covered by such phrases as "eyes of the mind" or "brain vision." But the facts are that in a surprisingly short time after one loses one's sight (usually about two or three years) the constructing of mental pictures becomes so difficult as to be practically prohibitive. This is for sound psychological reasons.

There is no "eternal darkness." It seems altogether logical that there should be, of course, and the seeing often think they are duplicating the conditions of blindness by covering their eyes or walking to a dark room. But the facts are that there is no sensation of light or darkness whatever. Sight is simply gone and all impressions received or ideas formed are in terms of the other remaining senses.

Referring again to my description, it will be seen that my impression of Main Street on a spring Saturday afternoon is compounded of hearing, temperature, smell, and touch; four senses usually considered of less value than sight. These four give the blind practically all their impressions of places and things and, contrary to what is generally assumed, their relative usefulness is in exactly this order.

The resulting impression is naturally not complete. At such events as baseball games where color and movement are the striking features, something is lacking. A blind person's impression is not always accurate, either. The sound of an automobile engine some distance off may be a slow truck or a fast-moving car. None of the lesser senses is as vivid as sight. Think of a friend you formerly knew well but have not seen for say five years. You may be able to recall every detail of his or her appearance without difficulty. But the odds are heavily against your being able to recall his voice at all, and this is a limitation with which the blind must reckon constantly.

A Blind Man at a Football Game

Yet in spite of these obvious shortcomings the impressions received by the blind through their lesser senses are vastly more satisfactory than the seeing suspect.

For example: the temperature was not unusually low for October but it was damp and bleak. The wind had a raw insistent bite that searched out every unprotected spot. When I finally reached it, the genial warmth of the fire snapping briskly, on the living-room hearth was more than welcome. The wide curved-back armchair drawn up before it on the thick rug was comfortable too, entirely too comfortable to leave one alert, and if anything else was needed to bring on a luxurious drowsiness there was the clinging fragrance of incense in the air.

Does this give you the feeling of snug comfort? It was what I experienced and no doubt you would, too. The difference is that your impression would consist more of say, dead grass, bare trees, leaping flames, soft draperies, the warm glow of a lamp, and the attractive cover of a magazine; things seen instead of felt, heard, smelled, and sensed through temperature.

It was our ball, first down, on our opponent's four-yard line. The man at my left was driving his shoulder against mine in an unconscious attempt to help the team along and clamoring hoarsely for them to "Put it over!" Everybody was clamoring, hoarsely, shrilly, beseechingly. The bedlam hushed suddenly, then rose again with a triumphant rush. Two yards! Only two more! The man at my left pushed harder. The din swelled deafeningly, fell again, and rose again, not quite so triumphant. A yard that time. An imperious commanding note crept into the noise. The referee's whistle came through it thinly. There was another hush, another burst, baffled. Half a yard! Half a yard more! I had to brace myself against the onslaughts of the man to my left. The roar rose to a pitch of frenzy, beat across the field for what seemed minutes, then with a last thwarted gasp, dropped into an abysmal groan. The line had held.

Compare this with your impressions of similar moments at football games. My impression, you will notice, is composed of hearing and touch sensations, while yours will be made up once more primarily of things seen; darting scarlet and gray, and blue and gold-clad figures down on the white-lined field, the flash of a pass, the crown of a woman's hat in front of you, confetti on the collar of a man's overcoat. But I think you will agree that the tug and grip of the thing is nearly the same.

Also contrast this bit with your own experience. A healing peace filled the little twisting valley. Dust muffled our feet on the road that seemed to cross the creek at every bend. A kinglet was trilling buoyantly off at the left, a thrush singing its rich triplets ahead, a cowbell tinkling faintly somewhere behind the hills, and the friendly little breeze had the living fragrance of new green things.

It should not be difficult to understand, therefore, how the blind get a definite impression even of such things as houses and cities through senses other than sight.

There are many things, of course, such as sunsets, motion pictures, and art exhibitions, which appeal only to sight and accordingly leave the blind without any first-hand sensations. The impression they do get, too, is sometimes incomplete, inaccurate, and lacking in vividness, as has been explained. But practically all the more common experiences of life make an ample appeal to the lesser senses and taken by and large the results the blind get from their impressions of them are vastly fuller and more satisfying than most of the seeing suppose.

How the Blind See Airplanes

The seeing often inquire what sort of an impression the blind have of such objects as an airplane, an electric locomotive, or a mountain, which they cannot experience at first hand or if so, only in part. This does present some difficulties. In the case of the plane or locomotive of course, it is possible to walk about it, run the hands over various parts and in this way get a tactual notion of the thing. But this is not always satisfactory. It must not be forgotten that only that part of a thing which can be included within the reach of the two arms can be felt at one time, and this limit to perspective often results in a warped notion. The story of the six blind men who went to get an impression of an elephant in this way, and, after laying hold respectively of trunk, tail, and legs, fell into a bitter quarrel, contains considerably more truth than most of the seeing appreciate. Personally unless I can give an object a thorough handling I prefer to get my impression of it through a description supplied by a seeing person which I then treat simply as a set of known facts.

This last doubtless seems strange. The normal procedure for the seeing is to construct a mental picture from such a description, and remember the picture. But as has been explained it is exceedingly difficult for anyone who has been blind more than a comparatively short time to visualize an object, and when it is done the results are generally far from satisfactory. The mind does not create pictures. It merely constructs them by piecing together things already seen. So if the only remembered picture of an airship in a blind man's mind is one of the early Santos Dumont models, mere manipulation will hardly give him a satisfactory picture of the awe-inspiring Los Angeles. My impression of this ship therefore consists simply of an array of facts; cigar-shaped silver-gray gas bag six hundred or seven hundred feet long and ninety or one hundred feet high, five or six stream-lined gondolas slung beneath, etc.

The same is true of a great mass of facts the seeing unconsciously convert into and remember as mental pictures. When you are not sure of the spelling of a word you write it out because you remember the correct spelling, not as a series of letters or sounds, but as a mental picture and must therefore have something visible to compare it with. Even such things as business organization plans are remembered in the form of charts, while the blind must of course remember them simply as facts. But the additional effort involved is not as great as is generally supposed.

Of all the questions put to the blind by the seeing, however, the one asked by far most frequently and with the greatest interest is what sort of an impression the blind have of people. "How do you think of friends you have never seen or strangers you have just met?" This is altogether normal. People are the most interesting and important of all created things, and a man's notion of them goes far toward coloring his whole life. But in spite of what seem insuperable obstacles this should be to the seeing the least mysterious and incomprehensible phase of blindness.

Have you a favorite movie actor? If you have, you probably feel that you know him well, often as well as you do your friends, even better than some. Yet did it ever occur to you that your whole notion of him is based exclusively on sight?

The truth is we are not nearly as much concerned about physical details as we think we are. Biography is not a mere description of a man. I doubt if even a tiny fraction of you can tell the color of Washington's or Lincoln's hair and eyes. But that does not detract in the least from the clearness of your idea of the men.

The thing we are all interested in most if not solely is character, personality, individuality, whatever you choose to call it, the thing within that shines out through, often in spite of physical traits and features. The blind have just as good an opportunity to get an accurate and significant impression of this as the seeing—sometimes even a shade more accurate.

A seeing friend and I were discussing a certain executive we both knew. The friend, who had had considerably more contact with him than I, said he was qualified for a much larger position than the one he held. But I replied that it seemed to me he lacked certain qualities necessary for real leadership in any position. Time has proved that I was right.

How did I arrive at my conclusions regarding the man's character? Not by superiority of judgment or psychic powers. I reached them through the only thing about him I could observe, his speaking manner, and if you remember how your impression of a favorite movie actor's character is based simply on sight you will see there is nothing particularly remarkable about this.

Here is the situation. As has already been stated, the seeing make more use of sight than of any other sense. The great bulk of all received impressions is sight impressions. Acting on this more or less unconsciously you judge others first of all by their appearance and expect the same to be done with yourself. You admit this whenever you put on your best clothes and facial expression while applying for a position or going to a social affair. This is all well enough. Appearance is an important guide to character. But it is not the whole story and in many, many cases the voice and speaking manner, quite neglected, tell something about character which appearance is trying its best to keep very much in the background.

There is a woman who makes an excellent visual impression. Her features are attractive, her carriage and gestures graceful, and her dress distinctive. But the moment she opens her mouth her voice and speaking manner fairly shout shallow insincerity. On the other hand there is an old man whose appearance is anything but prepossessing. His face, not clean a good part of the time, is lined deep with living which has not always been of the best. His clothes are shabby to say the least and much of his speech is coarse. Yet I cannot talk to him without being struck by the straightforward warm-hearted genuineness of the man.

It should not be difficult for the seeing to grasp this. You have a perfectly definite impression of some one to whom you have merely talked over the telephone or whose voice you have simply heard broadcast by radio. The difference between us is that you try whenever possible to check this impression against a sight impression, while to the blind this voice impression is the chief though not the only clue to character.

Sometimes other things which are of little if any importance to the seeing change my whole impression. One man I know who has a splendidly convincing speaking manner, spoils it by a weak laugh that comes too easily. Another seriously discounts an otherwise good impression by shaking hands overlong. There is a woman who does the same thing by letting her clothes reek of the dirty kerosene stove on which she cooks. But these are exceptions, and it is the voice and the speaking manner that supply practically all my impressions of character.

My Insight into Your Character

They supply also more information about the mood and condition of a given individual than the seeing suspect. Such things as fatigue, a bad temper, elation, and worry crop out in the voice and speech like the proverbial sore thumb when the speaker has his or her face and gestures under such control that nothing is disclosed visually. A friend, for example, who is known for his ability to maintain a "poker face" while playing cards, advertises the fact that he holds a good hand the moment he makes an apparently harmless remark.

The seeing are kind to the blind, and the sort of kindness I am thinking of is not conventional charity and something inspired by duty, but a personal thing far warmer and more significant. I often travel alone. There has never been an occasion when I was confronted by the slightest difficulty about reaching the right train or car when some seeing person, generally some one who did not know me, did not come to my assistance. Every blind person has had practically the same experience, and it seems to me in the light of this that there must be vastly more kindness in the make-up of the average individual than he or she is ever very willing to admit.

Another fact which has struck me even more forcefully is that kindness cannot be deduced from or measured by what we think of as culture and morality. We think normally that some one well educated, with a life above reproach, will show more kindness and consideration to others than some one who is ignorant or whose conduct falls short of accepted standards. But it has been my experience that this does not follow. A man who is rough, "hard-boiled" to use his own phrase, and whose manner of living could scarcely be held up as a model, has often proved beyond the slightest doubt that there is more straight-from-the-heart human kindness in him than in a woman whose culture is as flawless as her conduct.

The seeing, without realizing it, are often too kind to the blind for their best interests. Blind persons who earn their living by house-to-house

[*Continued on page 180*]

A Fiction Feature Extraordinary

The OLD or the NEW

Two dramatic stories of tragic fate, *Mateo Falcone*, by Prosper Mérimée, and *Caybigan*, by James Hopper, are famous tales reprinted in the following pages

EACH month this department puts before you two exceptional fiction stories from the literature of the past. One is a masterpiece of enduring fame that has long survived its author, the other a more modern story of the same general character by a writer nearer our own time. The aid of a committee of discriminating authorities on fiction lends added attraction to a series that has so far resulted in the republication of stories by

Prosper Mérimée
Edward Everett Hale
Richard Harding Davis
James B. Connolly
Edgar Allan Poe
Nathaniel Hawthorne
O. Henry
Stephen Crane
H. G. Wells
Wilkie Collins
Edith Wharton
Joseph Conrad

This month's offerings are *Mateo Falcone*, by Prosper Mérimée, and *Caybigan*, by James Hopper.

The selection committee comprises Dr. Blanche Colton Williams, author of "A Handbook of Short Story Writing," associate professor of English at Hunter College, and instructor in short story writing, Columbia University; Dr. Henry Seidel Canby, editor of *The Saturday Review of Literature*, and author of several books on the short story; and Mr. Harry Esty Dounce, author, reviewer, and critic. Write them frankly in our care, your judgment of the stories published, together with suggestions regarding future stories for the series.

The Authors

Prosper Mérimée

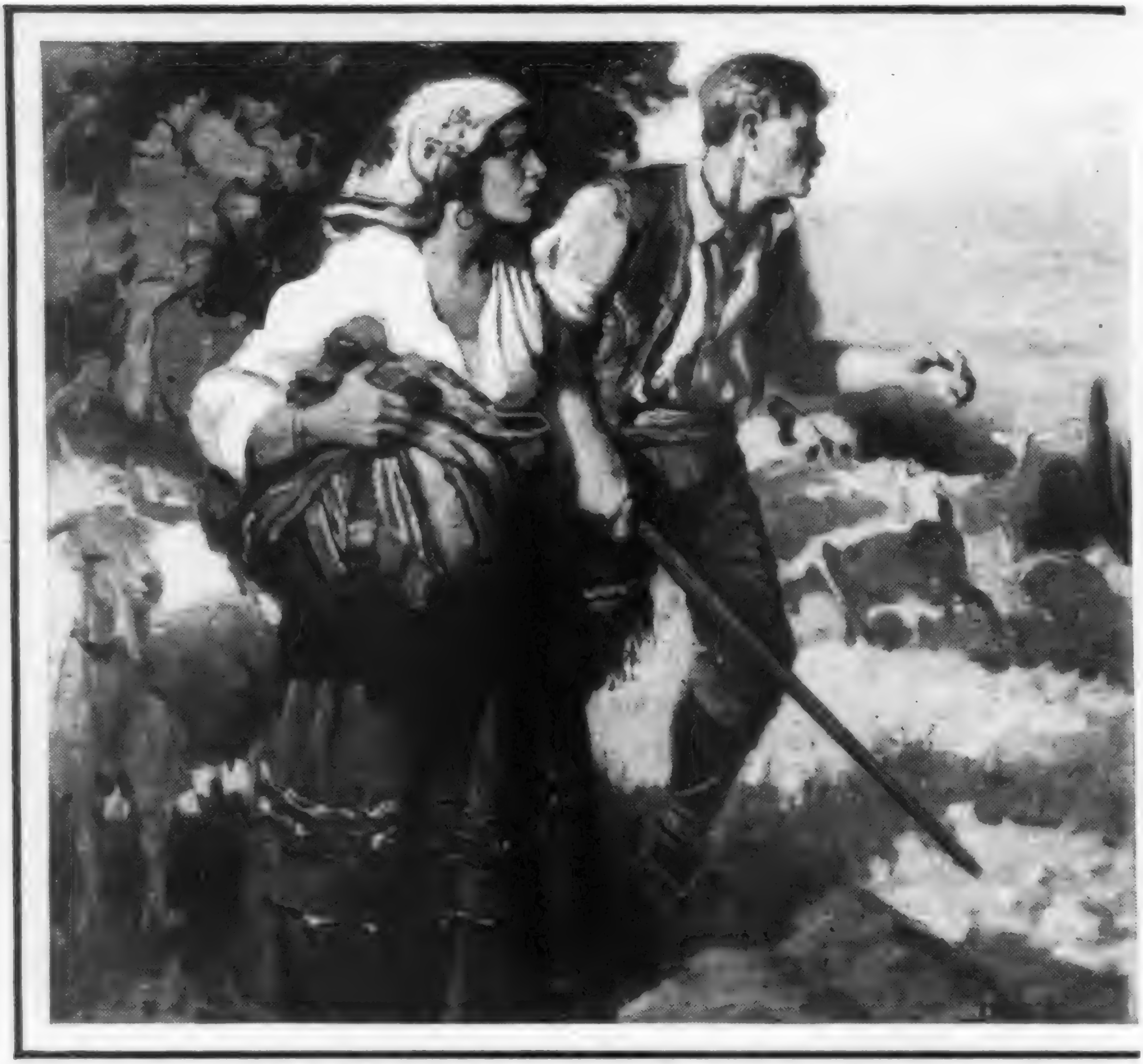
A GREAT French critic of Mérimée's time pronounced his *Mateo Falcone* the most cruel story in the world. That was not merely because what happens in it is so tragic, for equally tragic romances were in fashion. It was more because of the story-teller's attitude and manner, which in those days of literary extravagance were very unusual; he was a romanticist who refused to be romantic, to display any share in the emotions that he was arousing. He seemed as impersonal and inexorable as the Corsican code itself, and this made the fate of the boy seem excessively piteous, the circumstances particularly harrowing. It still does, but not to the same extent, for we are used to Mérimée's method of getting powerful effects by repression, although no one has done it better than he did. His *Carmen*, already reprinted in the Old and New series, is another superb example of it. A third is *The Venus of Ille*, in which a malevolent-looking Roman statue is sagely discussed at length by an antiquarian and a village wiseacre—and then comes to life in the night and out of jealousy kills the bridegroom. These and a few more fine short stories and his Corsican novel *Colomba* are the only ones of Mérimée's works that are still read.

Outwardly, he was an arch cynic, but like his stories, he had the reputation of being much colder and more cynical at heart than he really was, until his letters were published after his death. He owed it in part to his fellow authors, many of whom hated him, in return for his hatred of literary pose and fondness for sticking pins in it. His career began, characteristically, with a hoax, plays that purported and were believed to be by a Spanish authoress, who was imaginary. He wrote in all some twelve bookfuls of plays and fiction, a small output considering the length of his life, but writing was an avocation with him; he was an archæologist and in his later years something of a politician, as an influential friend of the Empress Eugenie. Mérimée died in 1870, at the age of sixty-seven.

James Hopper

WITH Kipling in vogue and inspiring young writers as he was in the years when Uncle Sam was taking up the "white man's burden" in the Philippines, it seems odd that only two gifted Americans were there to get material for fiction. One of them was James Marie Hopper, who wrote enough good short stories about the islands to fill a book, to which *Caybigan*, here reprinted, gave its title. He was in the government's education department in 1902-3, and a number of his heroes are American teachers among the Filippinos, but *Caybigan* is the story most representative both of his work at its best and of the special drama of the American occupation. Readers who remember the news and controversies of that time will recognize the notorious "water cure" in the treatment to which *Caybigan* was subjected. His was a harder story to tell well than that of Mateo Falcone, who is simply sacrificed to a point of honor; he sacrifices himself, and from a motive different from any of those that fiction has made familiar.

Jimmy Hopper, as the writing fraternity knows him, was born in Paris to an American father and a French mother. He was graduated from the University of California in 1898, having made a memorable record as a small-but-oh-my end and quarterback—which accounts for the football stories that are still among his specialties, and one of which, by its representation of what was thought "brutality," aroused discussion in football circles toward the time when the game was reformed by the introduction of the forward pass. He went through law school and was admitted to the bar, but instead of practicing, he did newspaper work and taught French before going to the Philippines. In 1914-15 he was an admirable war correspondent in France; later he was attached to the A.E.F. Two of his books are *Goosie*, a brilliant allegorical fantasy, and *9009*, a grim novel picturing prison's effect on a convict, the latter written in collaboration with F. R. Bechdolt. He lives in Carmel, California, and New York.



Mateo Falcone and his wife suddenly appeared at a turn in the path. At the

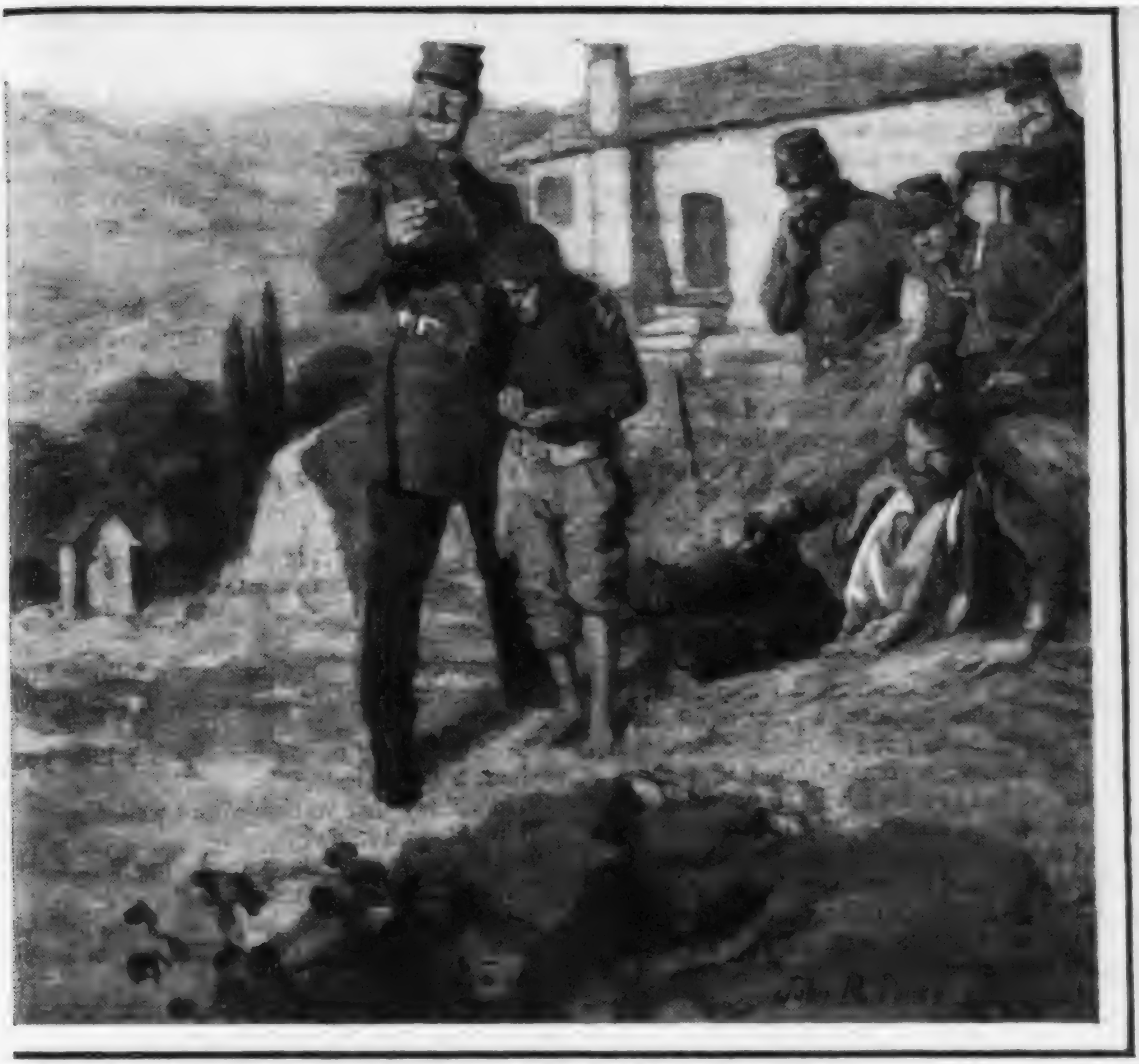
Mateo

By Prosper Mérimée

The harsh justice of a primitive code

(Reprinted. See Announcement on page 114.)

ON LEAVING Porto-Vecchio from the northwest and directing his steps towards the interior of the island, the traveler will notice that the land rises rapidly, and after three hours' walking over tortuous paths obstructed by great masses of rock and sometimes cut by ravines, he will find himself on the border of a great maquis. The maquis is the domain of the Corsican shepherds and of those who are at variance with justice. It must be known that, in order to save himself the trouble of manuring his field, the Corsican husbandman sets fire to a piece of woodland. If the flame spread farther than is necessary, so much the worse! In any case he is certain of a good crop from the land fertilized by the ashes of the trees which grow upon it. He gathers only the heads of his grain, leaving the straw, which it would be unnecessary labor to cut. In the following spring the roots that have remained in the earth without being destroyed send up their tufts of sprouts, which in a few years reach a height of seven or eight



sight of the soldiers, Mateo's first thought was that they had come to arrest him.

Falcone

Illustrated by
John R. Peirce

wipes out a stain on family honor

feet. It is this kind of tangled thicket that is called a maquis. They are made up of different kinds of trees and shrubs, so crowded and mingled together at the caprice of nature, that only with an axe in hand can a man open a passage through them, and maquis are frequently seen so thick and bushy that the wild sheep themselves cannot penetrate them.

If you have killed a man, go into the maquis of Porto-Vecchio. With a good gun and plenty of powder and balls, you can live there in safety. Do not forget a brown cloak furnished with a hood, which will serve you for both cover and mattress. The shepherds will give you chestnuts, milk and cheese, and you will have nothing to fear from justice nor the relatives of the dead except when it is necessary to descend to the city to replenish your ammunition.

When I was in Corsica in 18—, Mateo Falcone had his house half a league from this maquis. He was rich enough for that country, living in noble style—that is to say, doing nothing—on the income from his flocks, which the shepherds, who are a kind of nomads, lead to pasture here and there on the mountains. When I saw him, two years after the event that

I am about to relate, he appeared to me to be about fifty years old or more. Picture to yourself a man, small but robust, with curly hair, black as jet, an aquiline nose, thin lips, large, restless eyes, and a complexion the color of tanned leather. His skill as a marksman was considered extraordinary even in his country, where good shots are so common. For example, Mateo would never fire at a sheep with buckshot; but at a hundred and twenty paces he would drop it with a ball in the head or shoulder, as he chose. He used his arms as easily at night as during the day. I was told this feat of his skill, which will, perhaps, seem impossible to those who have not traveled in Corsica. A lighted candle was placed at eighty paces, behind a paper transparency about the size of a plate. He would take aim, then the candle would be extinguished, and, at the end of a moment, in the most complete darkness, he would fire and hit the paper three times out of four.

With such a transcendent accomplishment, Mateo Falcone had acquired a great reputation. He was said to be as good a friend as he was a dangerous enemy; accommodating and charitable, he lived at peace with all the world in the district of Porto-Vecchio. But it is said of him that in Corte, where he had married his wife, he had disembarrassed himself very vigorously of a rival who was considered as redoubtable in war as in love: at least, a certain gun-shot which surprised this rival as he was shaving before a little mirror hung in his window was attributed to Mateo. The affair was smoothed over and Mateo was married. His wife Giuseppa had given him at first three daughters (which infuriated him), and finally a son, whom he named Fortunato, and who became the hope of his family, the inheritor of the name. The daughters were well married: their father could count at need on the poinards and carbines of his sons-in-law. The son was only ten years old, but he already gave great promise of fine attributes.

On a certain day in autumn, Mateo set out at an early hour with his wife to visit one of his flocks in a clearing of the maquis. The little Fortunato wanted to go with them, but the clearing was too far away; moreover, it was necessary some one should stay to watch the house; therefore the father refused to have him come: it will be seen whether or not he had reason to repent.

He had been gone some hours, and the little Fortunato was tranquilly stretched out in the sun, looking at the blue mountains, and thinking that the next Sunday he was going to dine in the city with his uncle, the Caporal, when he was suddenly interrupted in his meditations by the firing of a musket. He got up and turned to that side of the plain whence the noise came. Other shots followed, fired at irregular intervals, and each time nearer; at last, in the path which led from the plain to Mateo's house, appeared a man wearing the pointed hat of the mountaineers, bearded, covered with rags, and dragging himself along with difficulty by the support of his gun. He had just received a wound in his thigh.

THIS man was an outlaw, who, having gone to the town by night to buy powder, had fallen on the way into an ambuscade of Corsican light-infantry. After a vigorous defense he was fortunate in making his retreat, closely followed and firing from rock to rock. But he was only a little in advance of the soldiers, and his wound prevented him from gaining the maquis before being overtaken.

He approached Fortunato and said:

"You are the son of Mateo Falcone, are you not?"

"Yes."

"I am Gianetto Saupiero. I am followed by the yellow-collars. Hide me, for I can go no farther."

"And what will my father say if I hide you without his permission?"

"He will say that you have done well."

"How do you know?"

"Hide me quickly; they are coming."

"Wait till my father gets back."

"How can I wait? Malediction! They will be here in five minutes. Come, hide me, or I will kill you."

Fortunato answered him with the utmost coolness:

"Your gun is empty, and there are no more cartridges in your belt."

"I have my stiletto."

"But can you run as fast as I can?"

He gave a leap and put himself out of the other's reach.

"You are not the son of Mateo Falcone! Will you then let me be captured before your son?"

The child appeared moved.

"What will you give me if I hide you?" said he, coming nearer.

The outlaw felt in a leather pocket that hung from his belt, and took out a five-franc piece, which he had doubtless saved to buy ammunition with. Fortunato smiled at the sight of the silver; he snatched it, and said to Gianetto: "Fear nothing."

Immediately he made a great hole in a pile of hay that was near the house. Gianetto crouched down in it and the child covered him in such a way that he could breathe without it being possible to suspect that the hay concealed a man. He bethought himself further, and, with the subtlety of a tolerably ingenious savage, placed a cat and her kittens on the pile, that it might not appear to have been recently disturbed. Then, noticing the traces of blood on the path near the house, he covered them carefully with dust, and, that done, he again stretched himself out in the sunshine with the greatest tranquillity.

A few moments afterwards, six men in brown uniforms with yellow collars, and commanded by an Adjutant, were before Mateo's door. This Adjutant was a distant relative of Falcone's. (In Corsica the degrees of relationship are followed much further than elsewhere.) His name was Tiodoro Gamba; he was an active man, much dreaded by the outlaws, several of whom he has already entrapped.

"Good day, little cousin," said he, approaching Fortunato. "How tall you have grown since I last saw you. Have you seen a man go past here just now?"

"Oh! I am not yet so tall as you, my cousin," replied the child with a simple air.

"You soon will be. But haven't you seen a man go by here, tell me?"

"If I have seen a man go by?"

"Yes, a man with a pointed hat of black velvet, and a vest embroidered with red and yellow."

"A man with a pointed hat, and a vest embroidered with red and yellow?"

"Yes, answer quickly, and don't repeat my questions."

"This morning the curé passed before our door on his horse, Piero. He asked me how papa was, and I answered him—"

"Ah, you little scoundrel, you are playing sly! Tell me quickly which way Gianetto went? We are looking for him, and I am sure he took this path."

"Who knows?"

"Who knows? It is I know that you have seen him."

"Can any one see who passes when they are asleep?"

"You were not asleep, rascal; the shooting woke you up."

"Then you believe, cousin, that your guns make so much noise? My father's carbine has the advantage of them."

"The devil take you, you cursed little scapegrace! I am certain that you have seen Gianetto. Perhaps, even, you have hidden him. Come, comrades, go into the house and see if our man is there. He could only go on one foot, and the knave has too much good sense to try to reach the maquis limping like that. Moreover, the bloody tracks stop here."

"And what will papa say?" asked Fortunato with a sneer. "What will he say if he knows that his house has been entered by you while he was away?"

"You rascal!" said the Adjutant, taking him by the ear, "do you know that it only remains for me to make you change your tone? Perhaps you will speak differently after I have given you twenty blows with the flat of my sword."

Fortunato continued to sneer.

"My father is Mateo Falcone," said he with emphasis.

"You little scamp, you know very well that I can carry you off to Corte or to Bastia. I will make you lie in a dungeon, on straw, with your feet in shackles, and I will have you guillotined if you don't tell me where Gianetto is."

The child burst out laughing at this ridiculous menace. He repeated:

"My father is Mateo Falcone."

"Adjutant," said one of the soldiers in a low voice, "let us have no quarrels with Mateo Falcone."

GAMBA appeared evidently embarrassed. He spoke in an undertone with the soldiers who had already visited the house. This was not a very long operation, for the cabin of a Corsican consists only of a single square room, furnished with a table, some benches, chests, housekeeping utensils and those of the chase. In the meantime, little Fortunato petted his cat and seemed to take a wicked enjoyment in the confusion of the soldiers and of his cousin, Gamba.

One of the men approached the pile of hay. He saw the cat, and gave the pile a careless thrust with his bayonet, shrugging his shoulders as if he felt that his precaution was ridiculous. Nothing moved; the boy's face betrayed not the slightest emotion.

The Adjutant and his troop were cursing their luck. Already they were looking in the direction of the plain, as if disposed to return by the way they had come, when their chief, convinced that menaces would produce no impression on Falcone's son, determined to make a last effort, and try the effect of caresses and presents.

"My little cousin," said he, "you are a very wide-awake little fellow. You will get along. But you are playing a naughty game with me; and if I wasn't afraid of making trouble for my cousin, Mateo, the devil take me! but I would carry you off with me."

"Bah!"

"But when my cousin comes back I shall tell him about this, and he will whip you till the blood comes for having told such lies."

"You don't say so!"

"You will see. But hold on!—be a good boy and I will give you something."

"Cousin, let me give you some advice; if you wait much longer Gianetto will be in the maquis and it will take a smarter man than you to follow him."

The Adjutant took from his pocket a silver watch worth about ten crowns, and noticing that Fortunato's eyes sparkled at the sight of it, said, holding the watch by the end of its steel chain:

"Rascal! You would like to have such a watch as that hung around your neck, wouldn't you, and to walk in the streets of Porto-Vecchio proud as a peacock? People would ask you what time it was, and you would say: 'Look at my watch.'"

"When I am grown up, my uncle, the Caporal, will give me a watch,"

"Yes; but your uncle's little boy has one already; not so fine as this either. But then, he is younger than you."

The child sighed.

"Well! Would you like this watch, little cousin?"

Fortunato, casting sidelong glances at the watch, resembled a cat that has been given a whole chicken. It feels that it is being made sport of, and does not dare to use its claws; from time to time it turns its eyes away so as not to be tempted, licking its jaws all the while, and has the appearance of saying to its master, "How cruel your joke is!"

However, the Adjutant seemed in earnest in offering his watch. Fortunato did not reach out his hand for it, but said with a bitter smile:

"Why do you make fun of me?"

"Good God! I am not making fun of you. Only tell me where Gianetto is and the watch is yours."

Fortunato smiled incredulously, and fixing his black eyes on those of the Adjutant tried to read there the faith he ought to have had in his words.

"May I lose my epaulettes," cried the Adjutant, "if I do not give you the watch on this condition. These comrades are witnesses; I cannot deny it."

While speaking he gradually held the watch nearer till it almost touched the child's pale face, which plainly showed the struggle that was going on in his soul between covetousness and respect for hospitality. His breast swelled with emotion; he seemed about to suffocate. Meanwhile the watch was slowly swaying and turning, sometimes brushing against his cheek. Finally, his right hand was gradually stretched toward it; the ends of his fingers touched it; then its whole weight was in his hand, the Adjutant still keeping hold of the chain. The face was light blue; the case newly burnished. In the sunlight it seemed to be all on fire. The temptation was too great. Fortunato raised his left hand and pointed over his shoulder with his thumb at the hay against which he was reclining. The Adjutant understood him at once. He dropped the end of the chain and Fortunato felt himself the sole possessor of the watch. He sprang up with the agility of a deer and stood ten feet from the pile, which the soldiers began at once to overturn.

THERE was a movement in the hay, and a bloody man with a poinard in his hand appeared. He tried to rise to his feet, but his stiffened leg would not permit it and he fell. The Adjutant at once grappled with him and took away his stiletto. He was immediately secured, notwithstanding his resistance.

Gianetto, lying on the earth and bound like a fagot, turned his head towards Fortunato, who had approached.

"Son of ——!" said he, with more contempt than anger.

The child threw him the silver-piece, which he had received, feeling that he no longer deserved it; but the outlaw paid no attention to the movement, and with great coolness said to the Adjutant:

"My dear Gamba, I cannot walk; you will be obliged to carry me to the city."

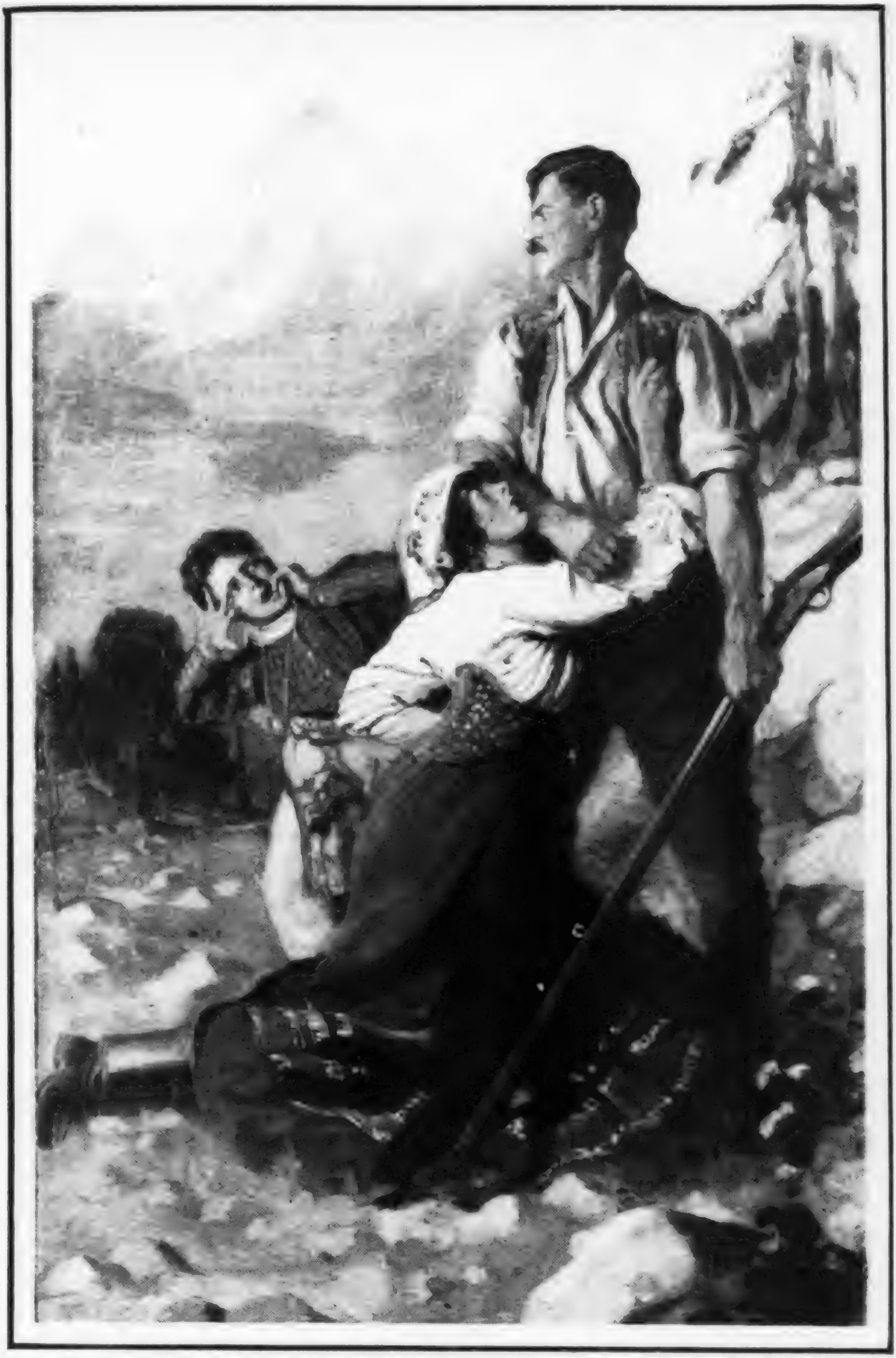
"Just now you could run faster than a buck," answered the cruel captor, "but be at rest. I am so pleased to have you that I would carry you a league on my back without fatigue. Besides, comrade, we are going to make a litter for you with your cloak and some branches, and at the Crespoli farm we shall find horses."

"Good," said the prisoner. "You will also put a little straw on your litter that I may be more comfortable."

While some of the soldiers were occupied in making a kind of stretcher out of some chestnut boughs and the rest were dressing Gianetto's wound, Mateo Falcone and his wife suddenly appeared at a turn in the path that led to the maquis. The woman was staggering under the weight of an enormous sack of chestnuts, while her husband was sauntering along, carrying one gun in his hands, while another was slung across his shoulders, for it is unworthy of a man to carry other burdens than his arms.

At the sight of the soldiers Mateo's first thought was that they had come to arrest him. But why this thought? Had he then some quarrels with justice? No. He enjoyed a good reputation. He was said to have a particularly good name, but he was a Corsican and a highlander, and there are few Corsican highlanders who, in scrutinizing their memory, cannot find some peccadillo, such as a gun-shot, dagger-thrust, or similar trifles. Mateo more than others had a clear conscience; for more than ten years he had not pointed his carbine at a man, but he was always prudent, and put himself into a position to make a good defense if necessary. "Wife," said he to Giuseppa, "put down the sack and hold yourself ready."

She obeyed at once. He gave her the gun that was slung across his shoulders, which would have bothered him, and, cocking the one he held in his hands, advanced slowly towards the house, walking among the trees that bordered the road, ready at the least hostile demonstration, to hide behind the largest, whence he could fire from under cover. His wife followed closely behind, holding his reserve weapon and his cartridge-box. The duty of a good housekeeper, in case of a fight, is to load her husband's carbines.



Fortunato's sobs redoubled as Falcone kept his lynx-eyes upon him. Giuseppa hastened after Mateo and seized him by the arm. "Leave me alone," said Mateo, "I am his father."

On the other side the Adjutant was greatly troubled to see Mateo advance in this manner, with cautious steps, his carbine raised, and his finger on the trigger.

"If by chance," thought he, "Mateo should be related to Gianetto, or if he should be his friend and wish to defend him, the contents of his two guns would arrive amongst us as certainly as a letter in the post; and if he should see me, notwithstanding the relationship!"

In this perplexity he took a bold step. It was to advance alone towards Mateo and tell him of the affair while accosting him as an old acquaintance, but the short space that separated him from Mateo certainly seemed terribly long.

"Hello! old comrade," cried he. "How do you do, my good fellow? It is I, Gamba, your cousin."

Without answering a word, Mateo stopped, and in proportion as the other spoke, slowly raised the muzzle of his gun so that it was pointing upward when the Adjutant joined him.

"Good-day, brother," said the Adjutant, holding out his hand. "It is a long time since I have seen you."

"Good-day, brother."

"I stopped while passing, to say good-day to you and to cousin Pepa here. We have had a long journey today, but have no reason to complain, for we have captured a famous prize. We have just seized Gianetto Saupiero."

"God be praised!" cried Giuseppa. "He stole a milch goat from us last week."

These words reassured Gamba.

"Poor devil!" said Mateo sorrowfully, "he was hungry."

"The villain fought like a lion," continued the Adjutant, a little mortified. "He killed one of my soldiers, and not content with that, broke Caporal Chardon's arm; but that matters little, he is only a Frenchman. Then, too, he was so well hidden that the devil couldn't have found him. Without my little cousin, Fortunato, I should never have discovered him."

"Fortunato!" cried Mateo.

"Fortunato!" repeated Giuseppa.

"Yes, Gianetto was hidden under the haypile yonder, but my little cousin showed me the trick. I shall tell his uncle, the Caporal, that he may send him a fine present for his trouble. Both his name and yours will be in the report that I shall send to the Attorney-general."

"Malediction!" said Mateo in a low voice.

They had rejoined the detachment. Gianetto was already lying on the litter ready to set out. When he saw Mateo and Gamba in company he smiled a strange smile, then, turning his head towards the door of the house, he spat on the sill, saying:

"House of a traitor."

Only a man determined to die would pronounce the word traitor to Falcone. A good blow with the stiletto, which there would be no need of repeating, would have immediately paid the insult. Mateo made no other movement than to place his hand on his forehead like a man who is dazed.

Fortunato had gone into the house when his father arrived, but now he reappeared with a bowl of milk which he handed with downcast eyes to Gianetto.

"Get away from me!" cried the outlaw, in a loud voice. Then, turning to one of the soldiers, he said:

"Comrade, give me a drink."

THE soldier placed his gourd in his hands, and the prisoner drank the water handed to him by a man with whom he had just exchanged bullets. He then asked them to tie his hands across his breast instead of behind his back.

"I like," said he, "to lie at my ease."

They hastened to satisfy him; then the Adjutant gave the signal to start, said adieu to Mateo, who did not respond, and descended with rapid steps towards the plain.

Nearly ten minutes elapsed before Mateo spoke. The child looked with restless eyes, now at his mother, now at his father, who was leaning on his gun and gazing at him with an expression of concentrated rage.

"You begin well," said Mateo at last with a calm voice, but frightful to one who knew the man.

"Oh, father!" cried the boy, bursting into tears, and making a forward movement as if to throw himself on his knees. But Mateo cried, "Away from me!"

The little fellow stopped and sobbed, immovable, a few feet from his father.

Giuseppa drew near. She had just discovered the watch-chain, the end of which was hanging out of Fortunato's jacket.

"Who gave you that watch?" demanded she in a severe tone.

"My cousin, the Adjutant."

Falcone seized the watch and smashed it in a thousand pieces against a rock.

"Wife," said he, "is this my child?"

Giuseppa's cheeks turned a brick-red.

"What are you saying, Mateo? Do you know to whom you speak?"

"Very well, this child is the first of his race to commit treason."

Fortunato's sobs and gasps redoubled as Falcone kept his lynx-eyes upon him. Then he struck the earth with his gun-stock, shouldered the weapon, and turned in the direction of the maquis, calling to Fortunato to follow. The boy obeyed.

Giuseppa hastened after Mateo and seized his arm.

"He is your son," said she with a trembling voice, fastening her black eyes on those of her husband to read what was going on in his heart.

"Leave me alone," said Mateo, "I am his father."

Giuseppa embraced her son, and bursting into tears entered the house. She threw herself on her knees before an image of the Virgin and prayed ardently. In the meanwhile Falcone walked some two hundred paces along the path and only stopped when he reached a little ravine which he descended. He tried the earth with the butt-end of his carbine, and found it soft and easy to dig. The place seemed to be convenient for his design.

"Fortunato, go close to that big rock over there."

THE child did as he was commanded, then he kneeled.

"Say your prayers."

"Oh, father, father, do not kill me!"

"Say your prayers!" repeated Mateo in a terrible voice.

The boy, stammering and sobbing, recited the Pater and the Credo. At the end of each prayer the father loudly answered, "Amen!"

"Are those all the prayers you know!"

"Oh, father, I know the Ave Maria and the litany that my aunt taught me."

"It is very long, but no matter."

The child finished the litany in a scarcely audible tone.

"Are you finished?"

"Oh! my father, have mercy! Pardon me! I will never do so again. I will beg my cousin, the Caporal, to pardon Gianetto."

He was still speaking. Mateo raised his gun, and, taking aim, said:

"May God pardon you!"

The boy made a desperate effort to rise and grasp his father's knees, but there was not time. Mateo fired and Fortunato fell dead.

Without casting a glance at the body, Mateo returned to the house for a spade with which to bury his son. He had gone but a few steps when he met Giuseppa, who, alarmed by the shot, was hastening hither.

"What have you done?" cried she.

"Justice."

"Where is he?"

"In the ravine. I am going to bury. He died a Christian. I shall have a mass said for him. Have my son-in-law, Tiodoro Bianchi, sent for to come and live with us."

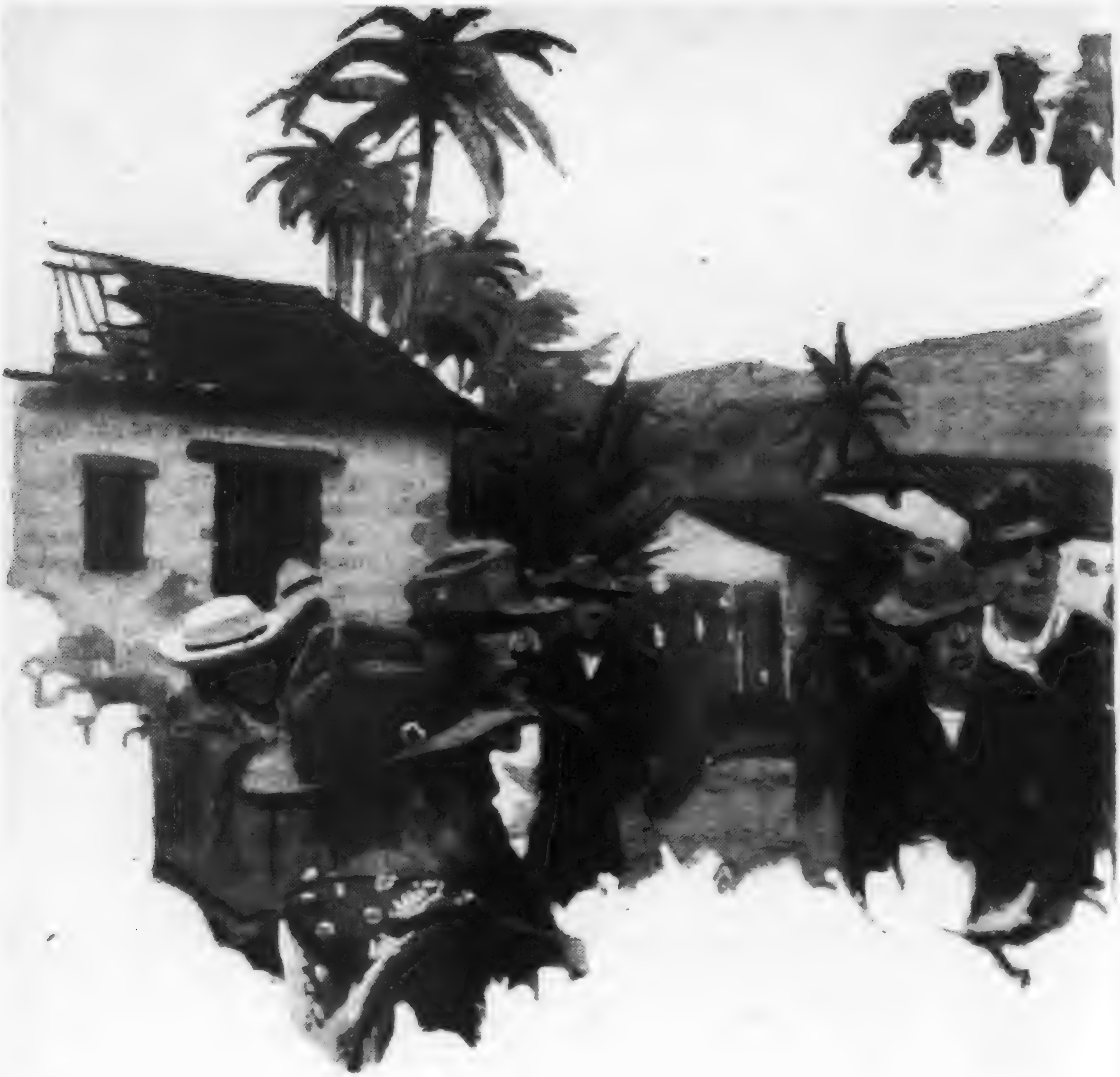
Next month's offerings in the Old or New series will be "The Sire De Maletroit's Door," by Robert Louis Stevenson, and "A Story Against Women," by Donn Byrne.

Never Touched Me!

A Prize Contest Announcement

HAVE you ever had a narrow escape from death or disaster—an accident (not illness) that brought you face to face with the Grim Reaper for a moment before the danger was suddenly averted? It may have been by land or sea, in fire or flood. It may have been an encounter with thugs or wild animals, or the result of an accident on a train or boat, a bridge or elevator, a motorcar or airplane—in short, any one of the countless ways that this age provides in so great abundance for endangering human life.

For the best letter describing such a personal experience we offer three prizes: First Prize, $25.00; Second Prize, $15.00; Third Prize, $10.00. Preference will be given to letters of not more than six hundred words. The competition closes March 1st. Contributions cannot be returned unless accompanied by a two-cent stamp. The editors will be the judges. Address: "Contest Editor," Everybody's Magazine, Spring and Macdougal Streets, New York City.



Caybigan*

The fate of a little brown brother

(*Reprinted. See announcement on page 114.*)

WHEN Sergeant Blount's detachment marched into San Juan, and in the center of the plaza grounded arms with a crash that ran along the stone flagging in vibrating menace, the little pueblo cowered in a completeness of fear and abject surrender never reached before. Like lizards a few brown beings here and there slid out of sight; and the big blue-shirted men, grouped there beneath the white sunlight, found themselves as in a vacuum of heat and silence. But they had an uneasy sensation of eyes, eyes timorous and hostile, shifting and malevolent, from behind closed shutters and torn nipa walls peering upon them in tremulous distrust. In her stall at the head of the street, Eustefania, hundred-year-old, wrinkled, black, toothless, was hastily gathering up her store—two mangoes, a cluster of bananas, a dozen rice cakes, five twine-wrapped cheroots—into her panuelo with trembling hands. And Pedro Lasco, crouching upon the stone steps of the church, a cigaret between his fingers, found his simple and

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*Pronounced *Kī-be'eg-an.*

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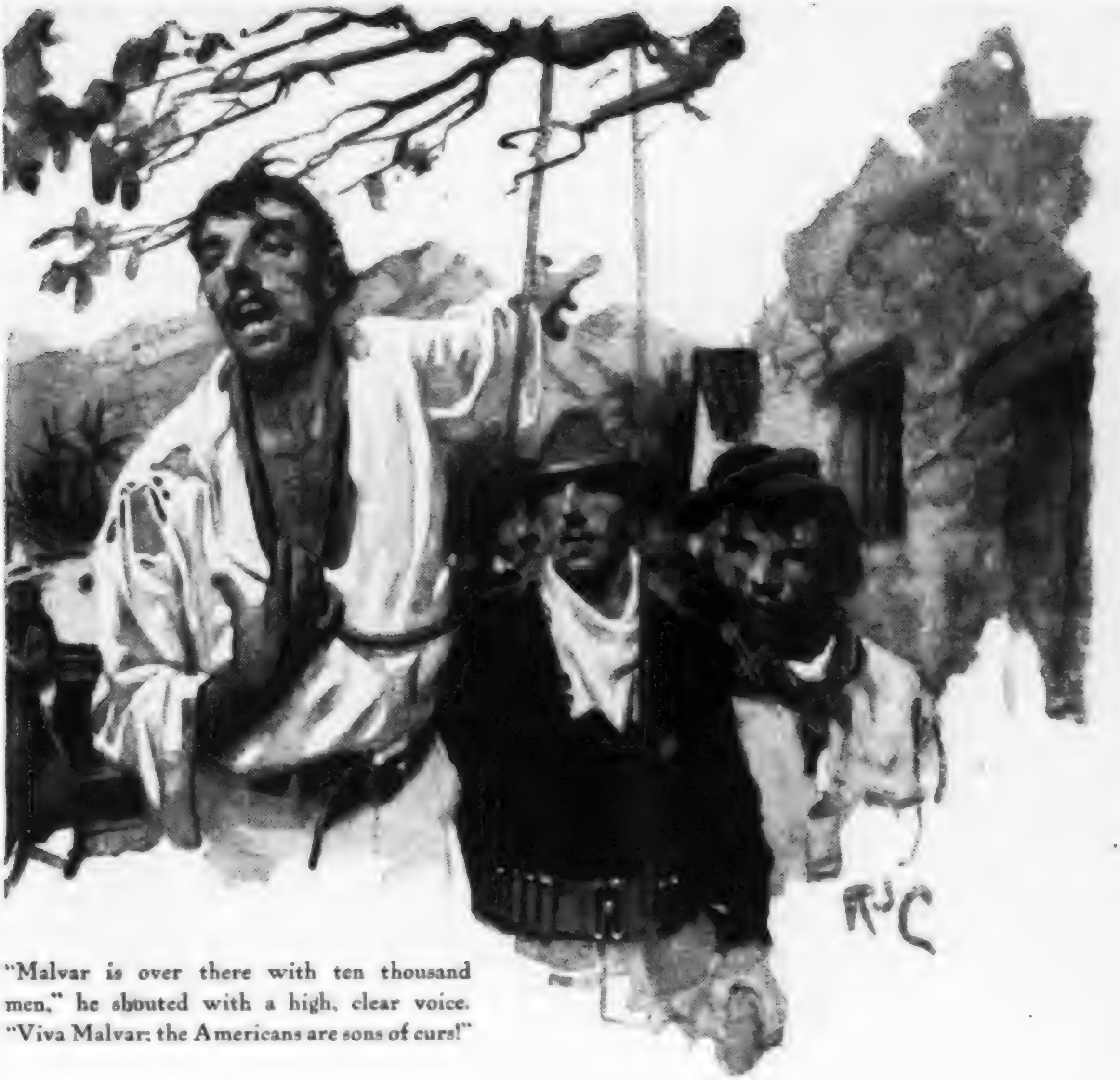


"Malvar is over there with ten thousand men," he shouted with a high, clear voice. "Viva Malvar; the Americans are sons of curs!"

By James Hopper

Illustrated by R. J. Cavaliere

who burned with a passion to serve

complex soul filled with a new and inexplicable tumult.

For from the man standing there at the head of the little troop there radiated Mastery. Pedro, in his blind, dark way, tried to analyze the impression, to find how this particular being differed from other tall, gaunt, brutal Americans that he had met in the past, before whom he had quailed physically, but never morally; but immediately he was submerged in that feeling he so hated—of confusion, blackness, bewilderment—which invariably seized him whenever he, man of a primitive race, sought to penetrate his own soul, obscure with complications beyond his power to read. This alone he could tell:—that this man, among his six-footers, towered by half a head, that his shoulders were broad, that his hair was golden like that of the Santa Madre seen once, long ago, in the cathedral of Lipa. Later, by patience of eye and obstinacy of contemplation he discovered other facts:—that the campaign hat of the Sergeant was wider-brimmed and more rakishly set than those of his fellows; that his belt hung down loose along the right thigh, to the weight of a huge, silver-mounted six-shooter which was not the regulation Colts; that, when he walked, his feet tinkled with long, rotary spurs, and that a red bandanna, knotted negligently about the neck, flamed up the blue and khaki with splendor.

The men stood at ease in the center of the plaza. The Sergeant took from his breast pocket a cake of tobacco, bit off a piece with a slight swagger, then looked about him carefully. His eyes met those of Pedro. "Alica, caybigan—come here friend!" he shouted with cavalier amicability.

"Caybigan—friend!" The obscure emotions in Pedro's breast surged suddenly into something almost definite, something big and soft that was sweet and compelled. Slowly he came down the steps in feline grace of movement and stood gravely before the big man, one foot slightly in front of the other, his right hand upon his pliable waist. The Sergeant looked down upon him, pulling at his blond mustache. He smiled. The smile passed over Pedro in a shadow of indefinite discomfort; unconsciously he stiffened up, a little defiant.

"You take us to the best house here, caybigan," said the Sergeant.

The smile had gone, and that other sensation of sweetness and good will again possessed Pedro. "Opo," he answered simply.

And this was the beginning of the bond. Pedro showed the Sergeant the house best suited for cuartel, the natural spot for a horse-corral, the watering place at the river. That night, after he had been dismissed and had eaten his rice and fish, Pedro squatted long upon the bamboo floor of his little hut, pondering in his rudimentary way over the day's events. It was a poor hut, small, astonishingly bare; for Pedro's wealth was below, beneath the high, post-elevated floor. There, laid crosswise upon sustaining poles, were his hunting spears, harpoons, and paddles; keel-up upon the ground his banca, sharp-prowed, repitilian, and, hanging from post to post in heavy folds, ensilvered with fish-scales, his great dragnet. But his mind was not upon his riches; what he tried to read within him was dark and shifting; this only he could draw plainly from it:—a passionate desire to serve that big, golden-haired man with the jingling spurs, the red bandanna, the rakish sombrero; to serve, blindly, unquestioning, like a dog, with fatigue of body, and outpouring of sweat, and tongue-licking of boots. But even this feeling was not clear like a simple flame; athwart it there leaped a contradictory shadow. The smile; it was the smile. Pedro tried to consider it squarely, but that bewilderment which possessed him always when he attempted to read his soul, complicated with complications of which he had not the key, seized him with acute distress; and with an impatient gesture he brushed away the obsession, as he would a fly buzzing importunately before his eyes. He lingered long upon the clearer impulse, the idea of service, of devotion. "Caybigan," he murmured softly; "caybigan"—and in the balmy silence of the night the drawled syllables hung low with lingering sweetness.

EARLY the next morning he was about the cuartel, and when the Sergeant emerged, splendid in the rising sun, he was standing before him, alert of body, grave of eyes. "Hello, caybigan," shouted the Sergeant gaily. "Going to help me, eh?" He pulled at his golden mustache; he smiled. A vague discomfort possessed Pedro; unconsciously he drew back one step in deer-like movement. But as the smile disappeared and the Sergeant stood there, pensive with the day's plans, the impulse to serve this being, to toil, suffer for him, again swelled within his heart in choking longing. They were together all that day. Pedro took the Sergeant over the whole pueblo, pointed out the natural points of defense, of vulnerability, showed him where the outposts should be placed, took him to the ford, circled wide about the huddle of huts, discovering all the hidden trails radiating out to the plains, the hills, toward the lairs of the Insurrectos.

"Good-night, caybigan," said the Sergeant as they parted that evening.

"Paalan, caybigan," answered Pedro.

All day he had longed to slip that word "caybigan," and now he stood still a moment, tremulous like a wild thing, noting the effect. But the Sergeant seemed to accept. He turned on his heel with a gesture of the hand and tinkled into the cuartel, while Pedro sped to his hut, his heart in tumult. There he squatted long in the anguish of obscure analysis. It was the smile again, that almost imperceptible twitch of the corners of the mouth which the Sergeant had always as he looked down upon Pedro. Pedro tried to picture it there, in the darkness; but it eluded him mockingly, vivid before him for the time of a spark, then gone before he could pounce upon it, seize it in interpretation. It was a torturing game.

That day was only the first passed in a service that as time went on grew increasingly closer, more exacting from the one, more sacrificing from the other. It was in the midst of the Bell campaign. Dragging the country like a net, there marched ceaselessly large bodies of men. Behind them nipa roared; black volutes of smoke rose heavily to the sky, broke against the turquoise lid and, rebounding, filled the air with acrid haze. At night the horizon glowed as with phosphorescence; great, scorched trees threw their thousand arms in hysterical gesture to a lurid heaven. The country took on a bleached, tortured, convulsive aspect. The rivers ran pink with the blood of slaughtered cattle. And night and day, along the highways, the awed populations passed, women with babies astride their hips, upon their heads panuelos knotted about a few handfuls of rice;

men limp-armed, empty-handed; barefooted they pattered along the roads in thousands, toward the reconcentration camps, noiseless, speechless, stupefied, sullen-eyed and half mad. But up in the hills grim Malvar, starving, still hung on; though some of his men began to trickle down, famished, enfevered, without volition, sucked down by the void of desolation made about them.

And the great cry, reiterated incessantly from headquarters, athrill in men's mouths, on telegraph and telephone, was a ceaseless "Get the guns; get the guns; get the guns!" And the soldiery, wild with powder, fire, and carnage, that great cry ringing in their enfevered brains like a hallucination, "got guns" by deeds which, in their rare, cooler moments, came back to them as incredible nightmares. It was in this work that Sergeant Blount, athirst for praise and splendor of fame, threw himself with his ferocious energy and that Pedro proved the invaluable helpmate. He had been a great hunter; he could track like an Apache; and to this he united a singular faculty for obtaining information among his people. To the two caybigans the slightest starting point sufficed—a rumor, for instance, that a man with a gun had passed a certain place at a certain time. Instantly they had saddled and were off, and from the spot Pedro trailed like a hound, leaping from sign to sign. Often the trail led into the bosom of the hills and regretfully they had to stop before the probability of disappearing into an insurrecto stronghold. But often also the trail, circling, doubled back to one of the few pueblos, such as San Juan, kept here and there like cases in the desert of desolation, as baits, as constant, hypnotizing promise of ease, of rest, of plenty to the outlaws starving, desperate, in the hills. And then Pedro's more subtle faculty came to the fore. He questioned, threatened, cajoled, bluffed, pleaded, leaped from induction to induction, till he had settled upon the man, the treacherous "amigo" in league with the enemy. Sometimes even there Pedro's persuasive powers were enough; more often Blount then began to act—and there were scenes better left undescribed. So, little by little, the cuartel filled with a strange captured arsenal, and Blount's soul with satisfaction. Sometimes it was a Mauser, oiled, polished, pretty as a toy; more often a rusty Remington or German needle-gun; but also there were pathetic makeshifts—a piece of water-pipe tied to a rough-hewn block of wood, loaded by the muzzle and set off by the hot butt of a cigaret.

So Pedro rode, slept, ate, toiled with the Sergeant, and by the whole pueblo, soldier and native, he was called "Caybigan;" by all except Eustefania, crouching day after day like a mahogany sculpture upon the latticed floor of her little tienda. The old woman was jealous. One day when the soldiers, in wild hilarity had seized upon her basket of embryo ducks cooked in the shell and were hurling them at each other's heads, Blount had interfered. And now, whenever he passed, splendid, along the street, the old woman, like a statue coming to life, descended tremulously from her pedestal, and, running in front of him, bowed low and tried to kiss his hand.

AND yet in this service, in this renunciation, Pedro did not find the complete satisfaction that he craved. A heavy uneasiness was with him always, in rest or work, in peace or peril; a dull irritation, an obscure anguish that he could not fathom, but which each day became more oppressive, more insistent. It was the smile of his caybigan. At night he faced the distress of mental analysis, hour after hour, contemplating fixedly that smile. In its presence a strange weakness, a subtle debility, possessed him; to resist this he dwelt upon his past achievements. He had been a great hunter of hill and water. At the deer runs he was always leading *ginete*, galloped madly after the tremulous game, hour after hour, over mountain, down precipice, till he had worn it down, rode flank to flank with it and, seizing the moment, plunged his long lance into the throbbing spot behind the shoulder. And once when a *caiman* had snatched his goat off the bank of the river, he had plunged into the black pool; seeking the saurian into the cozy depths where sullenly it lay like a rock upon its prey, he had twined about it his big net, and, springing back to the surface, with his friends had triumphantly dragged it out to earth. Loud had been sung his praises during the fiesta that followed, while the viscous thief, corralled with bamboo poles, both eyes gouged out, died slowly beneath the sun, upon the baking strand. Yes, he was a gib man; even his caybigan, with hair of gold and tinkling spurs, could he have done better? But before the smile, malign there in the dark, all this, all these deeds, this valor seemed bleached of color and meaning. A heavy discouragement weighed upon him.

One night, at last, he came to a conclusion. And it expressed itself in one word, short and electric.

"Patay!" he said; "patay—kill!"

He would kill the smile.

He climbed down the bamboo ladder and, beneath the floor, went directly to the big net, hanging from post to post. From one of the flaccid folds he drew an object. In three leaps he was up again, and in the faint light of his little tin lamp, for a while he acted like a child with a doll. He crouched down, the thing upon his knee, spoke to it with tender accent, stroked it with long, gentle caress. But it was not a doll; it was a gun, a dainty Mauser carbine. It was oiled and polished, and beautiful, but he spent two hours over it, cleaning, oiling, snapping the delicate machinery. Then with a sigh of satisfaction, he went down again and laid the precious toy among the secretive folds of the net.

The following evening, as in the moonlight the Sergeant rode out to inspect the outposts, a shot rang near and a bullet wailed overhead. Pedro, through the bush screening him, saw the great horse shy and rear, saw the Sergeant's graceful, almost lazy recover. Then man and beast stood still, black, statuesque in the sheen of the moon, the horse with ears cocked forward, trembling beneath the compelling reining hand, the man erect and proud on the high-pommelled saddle. There was a silence long as infinity. The horse champed resoundingly at the heavy Mexican bit. Pedro panted. Slowly the Sergeant turned his head, from the thicket to the right, to the golden ribbon of road ahead, then smoothly, in imperceptible movement, to the left. His eyes were upon Pedro; they seemed to pierce the screen of brush to halt penetratingly upon the assassin. And upon the face, clear in the moonlight, appeared the smile.

A sense of immense helplessness whelmed Pedro; he crouched lower; his hands, flaccid, dropped their hold upon the gun which sank softly in the high cogon. There was a long, throbbing silence. Then the tinkle of spur rang out in silvery note. With an elastic bound the horse leaped forward, immediately to be checked by the powerful guiding hand; and slowly they moved down the moonlit road, horse and man, huge, black, granite-hewn—unconquerable.

But Pedro, sneaking back, low behind the thicket, pressed both hands to his breast, as if to hold there the germ of an idea he felt within; and with feverish haste hiding his gun, he crouched down at his accustomed place to face it. It was a dolorous process. The thing sparked, flamed, wavered, went out completely, sparked anew. He contemplated it fixedly, encouraged it, fanned it; and finally for a moment it blazed, vivid, calm, unforgettable.

"Alipusta!" he shouted triumphantly; "alipusta—contempt!" "Alipusta," he repeated slowly, contemplatively, the triumph of discovery sinking into the ashes of realization. Yes, that was it; it was contempt, that smile, the smile of his caybigan; contempt, thorough, tranquil, absolute.

DURING the following days, Pedro worked with renewed frenzy. There was some rumor of the presence of an Insurrecto camp near the pueblo somewhere. Pedro went about the taos, cajoled, threatened, flattered, begged, cross-questioned, menaced in the full exercise of his singular gift, progressing from rumor to probability, from probability to certainty, and then he searched the country like a hound, along subterranean trails, springing from trace to trace, hour after hour closer. But all the time he shot sly side glances at his big caybigan, in ambush for the smile, the smile of contempt which, as he worked more and more feverishly, nearer and nearer success, came to the Sergeant's lips with growing frequency, with less and less restraint, with increasing insolence. And at his heart a desire gnawed, a black, obscure desire for something, something—he could not tell what—something he could not determine, but which now was indispensable to him, without which he could not live; something that tasted like water to his thirst, but was not water. He wished no more to kill; the new longing overwhelmed the other more primitive impulse. It was something bigger, grander, more magnificent; it tore at his bowels, a want, vague, unnamable, but of corrosive violence. On the third day they located the camp; traveling sinuously along a trace of trail they saw at last, through the bamboo thicket, the pointed roof of the Insurrecto cuartel—a nipa hut in the center of a clearing. They stopped a moment in consultation; then Pedro slid smoothly through the cogon toward the camp. Half-an-hour later he was back, sprang up suddenly as from the earth at the feet of the Sergeant.

"Tacbo—gone," he said.

The Sergeant was accustomed to such disappointments. Tilting back his wide-brimmed sombrero in philosophical gesture, he followed Pedro toward the clearing. But as they broke out of the thicket he gripped his guide's arm with iron fingers and with a bound threw himself back into cover. For before the hut human figures sprawled in feigned sleep, their guns stacked behind them, and at the windows shadowy forms lurked. "What the devil—he began fiercely.

"Tacbo," reiterated Pedro; "manica—dolls," he added shortly.

The Sergeant understood, and with a swaggering clink of spurs stepped out again. It was as Pedro had said. The recumbent figures upon the ground were dummies of grass and cloth; the stacked guns were rough wooden counterfeits. They climbed the bamboo ladder into the house. More of the grotesque shapes were there, legs divergent and back-jointed; two leaned at the window, their hollow bellies bent at right angles over the sill, in solemn, peering attitudes. In the breeze their loose white camisas moved softly in undulating shivers; their big straw hats flapped like wings of bats. Hanging from the central rafter was a lamp, smoldering in yellow spark and sooty smoke; and against the harsh downpour of clear sunlight outside this little, soiled flame gave to the whole crew of contorted bodies an aspect of death, of carnage, of decay. The

Sergeant caught himself sniffing the air. "Let's get out of this," he said.

They climbed down the rude stairs again, and instinct, more than Pedro's guidance, took the Sergeant to the right, some fifty yards into the bush—and there it was, the trench—parallel to the trail, broad, deep, and all littered with signs of recent occupancy.

The Sergeant stood still, looking at the hut, at the trench, at the trail. He twirled his mustache pensively; muttered exclamations came to his lips.

It was a pretty arrangement. A detachment coming along the trail behind the guides and bursting out into this clearing, with its lure of men recumbent upon the ground, of stacked arms, of vague forms at the windows, shadowed forth in attempted surprise. Then from the brush to the right, the trench's enfilading murder—it was pretty indeed.

Again the Sergeant took in all the details, his head turning from point to point, from the hut to the trail, from the trail to the trench, then back again, assuring himself of the perfection of the plan. And Pedro looked at the Sergeant; as if hypnotized he stepped closer, in long, feline strides, coming suddenly at far intervals, his whole lithe body a-quiver. For there, in the eyes of the Sergeant, the caybigan, growing stronger, clearer, more certain every moment, there it shone, his desire, the form and shape at last of his obscure torturing desire. It was that—that which shone in the eyes of the Sergeant as he contemplated the perfection of the plot—it was that he longed for, thirsted for, that which he must have himself, absolutely, to guard and treasure and cherish. It was there, the torturing want of his entrails, there, but not his, not his yet.

Back in his hut that night, after hours of obscure battling, he named it at last, "Magtaca—magtaca—admiration."

And then instantly he leaped to the next step.

"For the enemy, magtaca; for the caybigan, alipusta."

Yes, that was it: for the enemy, admiration; for him the friend, the caybigan, contempt.

Pedro slid down to the big net below. And long in the dim light of his little lamp he oiled and cleaned and polished and caressed.

A MYSTERIOUS enemy began to vex the little detachment of San Juan with puerile attacks.

Every night a Mauser bullet came wailing down the Lipa road and passed over the outpost with a resounding hiss. The first time this occurred, the lone sentinel, returning the fire, doubled back prudently upon the guard rushing out to his support. Tense in vigilance, the little troops waited for the attack. But it did not come. At regular intervals a lone bullet screeched above their heads, and that was all. Finally they charged along the highway. A few more detached shots met them; then silence.

The following night the same thing took place—the wail of the lone bullet, the alarm, the pursuit—and nothing.

A new plan was tried. Four men were placed at the outpost with saddled horses within reach. At the humming approach of the first shot they leaped into their saddles and thundered down the highway; it stretched before them, moon-golden between the black thickets, and deserted. Returning they scouted the brush, the big horses crashing down the thick vegetation. But there was nothing.

A corps of native beaters was added the next night. They searched the bush thoroughly on both sides of the road. The shrill katydids dropped into silence; lizards, snakes, iguanas, loathsome beasts of obscurity rustled off in panic. But that was all.

Caybigan was called to the rescue. For two days he worked upon the inhabitants of the pueblo. But for once his wonderful faculty failed him; he found no trace of the enemy.

An ambush was prepared. Then men at early dawn lay down in the bush near the spot from which it was calculated the bullets came. All day they lay there, low, without a whisper, without a movement. But when night came, it was the other outpost, at the opposite extremity of the pueblo, which was attacked.

But gradually the affair grew more interesting. The man was learning to shoot. Each night the leaden missile screeched a little lower, a little closer. Finally, one night, the guard, when relieved, was found walking his post with his left arm limp along his side, neatly punctured by one of the mysterious bullets.

On the same morning, Blount, walking along the main street, was stopped by old Eustefania.

"Mi capitan," she said, "do you wish to know who shoots your soldiers at night?"

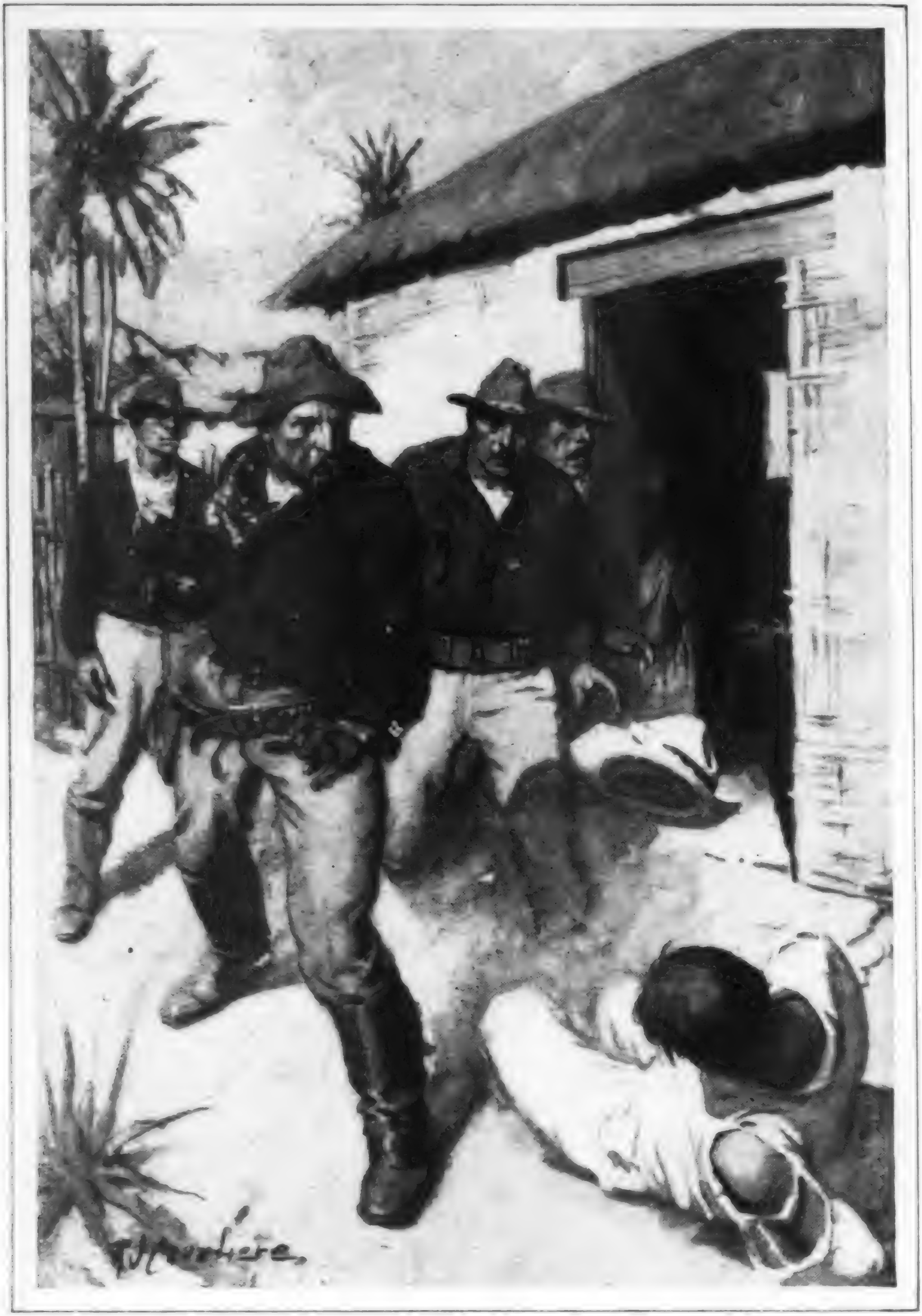
"Who?" asked the Sergeant curtly.

"Caybigan," she said.

From the depths of their caves her eyes glowed at him, fixed, violent.

And to the Sergeant the answer came as the revelation of something long and obscurely felt. Caybigan's absence from the night alarms, his singular failure to track down the sharpshooter, the ridiculous fiasco of the attempted ambuscade—a thousand and one little links suddenly clinked shut at the word in a chain of evidence, of certainty.

The Sergeant turned sharp on his heel; his spurs rang on the stone flagging. In the center of the plaza Caybigan, in his graceful, elastic pose, half-confident, half-wild, was bandying with three of the blue-shirted soldiers. Blount made straight for the group. When near he began to run, his face convulsed with rage, half real, half assumed, which experience had taught him invaluable for such moments.



With a tiger leap, the Sergeant bore upon Pedro, clutched his throat with his great hands, and threw him to the ground. Pedro went down without a quiver of resistance.

With a tiger leap he bore upon Pedro, clutched his throat with his great hands, and threw him to the ground.

Pedro went down without a quiver of resistance, and he lay there a white figure in the gray dust, his arms thrown out in a cross-like attitude of infinite surrender. His brown eyes looked up into the cold green light of the Sergeant's with golden luminosity; he smiled gently. "And this from my caybigan," he said.

"None of your Julius Cæsar on me," snarled the Sergeant, who had a vague acquaintance with the classics. "Your gun; where is it?"

"I have no gun, caybigan."

The Sergeant drew his revolver, and brutally he jambed the handle into the mouth of the prostrate man with a sharp twist that sent the pointed stock up against the palate, jerking the lower jaw down in distorted gap. "Water," he said shortly.

One of the men with whom Pedro had been talking brought a hollow bamboo full of water. Holding it above the prone figure he tilted it carefully. A silvery cascade poured down; it struck the distended nostrils in diamond rebound, streamed into the cavities at each side of the clamped revolver. Immediately Pedro was clutched by an agonizing sensation of drowning. He gasped, gurgled; his knees, as if automatically, snapped up to his chin. And the water came down, calmly, steadily, in a pretty silver flow, while he drowned, drowned.

"Wait a moment," said the Sergeant. The man with the tube gave it a slight tilt, the flow ceased. Slowly Pedro emerged from the torturing sensation; an immense weakness dissolved his bones; he trembled.

"Your gun," snarled the Sergeant, shaking him ragefully.

But Pedro, limp, eyes closed, waited for a little strength.

"Your gun," thundered the Sergeant.

And Pedro opened his eyes with a long sigh, like a very sleepy child. "I have no gun, caybigan," he said, very gently, very wearily.

After a while fury rose like a red foam into the brains of these men, made with ceaseless, ineffectual carnage, with bitter, unavailing toil, with the sense of their impotence in this eternal war against a vacuum. They threw themselves upon that limp, resistless body, shell of the impalpable soul unconquered within. They beat and kicked and choked.

But Pedro, very weak, very tired, very broken, still smiled gently and said, "I have no gun, caybigan."

Then from this orgy of violence Blount felt himself slowly emerge, white of face, cold in sweat, staggering as if drunk. He snapped up Pedro into his arms and laid him in the shade of a giant mango growing out of the ruins of a crumbled wall near by. An immense discouragement, a poignant disgust made him tremble as with bodily weariness. Down on one knee he bent over Pedro. Pedro felt the warm breath like a caress on his ear. "Caybigan," implored the Sergeant; "caybigan, amigo, friend, tell us, go on, tell us where you keep that gun, tell it to me, for my sake."

Pedro opened his eyes, and they smiled, golden, at the Sergeant.

"I have—" he began.

"No, not that, not that," cried the Sergeant, in frenzied fear of hearing again that answer which maddened him, blurred his brain with red haze. "Tell me, come, tell me; whisper it, low, right there, in my ear; come, caybigan."

"If I tell you, then will we be friends?"

"Caybigan," said the Sergeant, "we have worked together, eaten together, hunted together. We are friends. I don't want to hurt you, sure I don't. Tell me, tell me—and I'll love you like a son—like a little, foolish son," he added with access of tenderness.

"Well," began Pedro; "the gun, it is—"

But his eyes, fixed upon the Sergeant, froze suddenly as if before an apparition. The Sergeant was smiling, smiling the smile of yore, the unconscious smile of contempt, fatal, invincible.

"Go on; go on!" whispered the Sergeant.

"I have no gun, caybigan."

The Sergeant sprang to his feet. "Come on, fellows!" he shouted; "we'll hang him!"

They got a rope, noosed it about Pedro's neck, threw the loose end over a projecting branch of the mango and, standing him upon a box, secured it.

In that position they left him for five minutes, to let Fear seep into his stubborn heart. Every minute, in cold, tense accents, the Sergeant asked, "Where is the gun?"

Pedro did not answer. He stood there, very still, calling to himself all the strength left in his miserable racked body, composing himself as for some great and splendid sacrament. Then, as for the fiftieth time the question was asked, his right arm shot up toward the mountains, dark in the distance.

"Malvar is over there with ten thousand men," he shouted with high, clear voice. "Viva Malvar; the Americans are sons of curs!"

Somebody kicked the box.

But as, the whole earth lurching beneath him, he plunged into the Infinite abyss, he took with him a wild, tumultuous, and exquisite joy. For at last his last words of defiance, upon the face of his golden-haired caybigan he had seen—fluttering uncertain at first like the heralding colors of the dawn, then glowing clear, certain, resplendent—the expression he had caught at the lone cuartel in the bosque, the look of esteem, of admiration, full, unreserved, complete, for which he had thirsted so agonizingly, and which now at last had come to him; his beyond the power of man to take away, at the paltry price of treachery and torture and death.

The Most Hated Man in Town

"AW, LET 'im go!"

"Ya big stiff!"

A mob of outraged youngsters swarm around, as the khaki-clad man shoves a trembling pup into the truck, clangs the door after him, and is on his way to the "pound."

Anywhere in America you will find the dog-catcher the Most Hated Man in Town. He faces the wrath of all the kids, most of the women, and more than half of the men. Collecting his forlorn cargo for the pound, he is hailed with jeers and tears.

Tenth Avenue at Fiftieth Street, New York, rings with youthful protests.

"He wasn't doin' nothin'!"

"Supposin' you had a dawg o' your own—"

"I have," says the man in khaki. "Two of them."

Being a dog-catcher for two years has not lessened Conny Vensas's love for the animals. Nor has it wiped out the memory of the time (not so long ago, for he's only twenty-eight now) when he was one of the boys who crowded around "the wagon" with hostile words.

"Sure," Vensas admits, "I used to hate the dog-catcher. We'd run after him, and try to let the dogs out. I never had any idea, then—

"Say, I know how these kids feel. I've always had a dog myself. Used to have a little fox terrier—almost twenty years ago. I came home one day, and my folks had given him away. I went to the house where he had been taken, about two blocks off, and saw him. Then I started crying. I kept it up for three hours, till my mother was afraid I was going to be sick. Then they got the dog back for me."

That makes it easier for him to understand the youngsters who storm around him today when he stops with his helper to make a capture. Sometimes a troop of children will follow the machine, merely to toss articles of food, candies, cakes, even pretzels, to the imprisoned animals. Frequently, though, their demonstrations are more militant. Once Vensas returned to the truck and found the lock broken off the door.

"At first you get mad," he confesses. "But then you have to laugh. What else *can* you do?"

Even adults occasionally interfere with the work. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, which employs the forty odd dog-catchers working in Greater New York, has found it necessary to have the men in uniform, as a protection and indication of their authority. Despite this precaution, violence is often threatened and occasionally attempted. Usually it is averted only by adherence to the society's rule for conduct in the face of abuse: "Take it all and say nothing."

"I know how the kids feel," says Conny Vensas, dog-catcher. "But it's better for the homeless pup than starving or being maltreated."

The homeless pup, caged and riding to the pound, naturally excites sympathy. Suddenly he has more friends than he has known in all his miserable life.

"But he can still be saved if his license is paid in time," Vensas points out. "And if nobody wants him, what chance has he, anyway, running loose in the streets?"

In New York, the condemned dogs are killed by lethal gas; this is believed by the S. P. C. A. to be the least painful death it is possible to inflict.

"That's better for the dog," says Vensas, "than being run over by an auto—or starving."

There is still another side to the work done by "the most hated man in town." The New York dog-catcher, being a representative of the

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They Couldn't Handicap Him

GEORGE S. CONWAY, JR., of Englewood, New Jersey, must truly be of the stuff of which paladins are made.

In 1917, when the youth of the land was thrilled by the country's entrance into the World War, the boys began haunting the railroad stations, hungry even for a fleeting glimpse of the khaki-clad legions that daily were being rushed to secret ports of embarkation for service on the other side. On one of these epochal days, it so happened that a signal was set against a troop train from Camp Merritt, some of its packed cars coming to a stop at the Englewood depot. Instantly a group of eager youngsters, among whom was the then nine-year-old Conway, pressed close to the coaches.

One of the soldiers, observing that George seemed the most enthralled of all, impulsively leaned out of the window, gripped the lad under the arms and lifted him shoulder-high to the dusty sill, so that he could feast his eyes on what to him was a magic interior. A moment later, as the long train puffed into motion, the doughboy dropped his now thoroughly happy burden to the ground. But joy quickly turned to tragedy.

The boy tripped on the platform curb and his right foot was crushed into a useless mass under the wheels. It was at this point that young Conway gave evidence of the stamina and courage that were to make of him an outstanding figure among boys who have shown outstanding pluck. His first thought, of course, was to reach home, and though suffering intense agony, he somehow miraculously managed to hobble a good part of the intervening distance before some autoist mercifully picked him up and whisked him to a hospital. Even then it was only after they laid him on the operating table, preparatory to the amputation of the injured member, that the plucky little fellow lost consciousness.

Many boys, not to mention some men, if confronted with the readjustment of life which George Conway faced, would have gone around with long faces and have had small heart for the rest of this terrestrial struggle. But not this Spartan youth. He resolved not to let such a blow spell disaster for him. And so while convalescing, though hardly ever free from pain, he became a remarkable example of cheerfulness and optimism to his fellow patients.

When he was finally discharged and rejoined his playmates, the boy still continued to carry on with splendid courage and spirit. Naturally, his companions magnanimously wished to make allowances for their crippled friend. But he wanted none of their pity and was determined to meet them on an equal basis in all their activities. On their Boy Scout hikes, he, with his inseparable dog, insisted on accompanying them whether the destination was local or distant. In fact, such was his independence, that he soon set himself a goal so dizzy no one ever expected him to gain it.

The first crippled boy on crutches to pass the twenty-one tests for an Eagle Scout high jumps, and runs fifty yards in 7½ seconds.

He decided to try to qualify as an Eagle Scout. To visualize the magnitude of this step, it must be known that of the half million Boy Scouts of America, only five thousand have attained this difficult rank. There is but one higher honor possible for the followers of Sir Arthur Baden Powell: the saving of a human life. Bringing this mental picture down to more specific statistics, to earn a place in the aristocracy of Boy Scoutdom, one must pass twenty-one tests prescribed by the National Council of Boy Scouts.

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Jessie Cavanaugh's Last Chance

THROUGH sheer pluck and force of will a twenty-five year old girl has uncovered a fortune of rich lead ore in a deserted mine which three years ago killed her father. She made the strike, not by a lucky chance, but by a year's grilling labor, alone and unaided, in hourly danger of sudden death underground. The back-breaking, killing toil she experienced has probably never been gone through by any woman before—certainly never under such circumstances.

Down in Cherokee County in the southeastern corner of Kansas, and extending over the line into Missouri and Oklahoma, rich deposits of galena ore and zinc blende lie in the tilted limestone strata, where lead and zinc have been mined for years. It is here that James Cavanaugh, an old miner, met his death in a cave-in and his daughter, Jessie, found a fortune.

Ten years ago the "Last Chance," near Empire City, Kansas, was a flourishing lead mine. Thousands of dollars worth of lead ore was taken from its underground workings. A concentrating plant had been constructed and for two years the mine paid rich dividends to its owners. Then, without warning, the ore deposit suddenly tailed out and the mine was deserted. The machinery was sold and moved away and nothing remained but the waste dumps and the shaft.

A year or so later the props began to rot and rain and weather caused the shaft to cave in. A large, irregular opening leading from the surface to the deep underground drifts was the result. It had become, in mining parlance, a "cave-in"—that most dangerous of all man-traps. It was the sort of cavern in which young Floyd Collins perished last year in Kentucky while thousands of people worked night and day to disentomb him. Many such places are to be seen in the Missouri-Kansas-Oklahoma mining district around Galena. They are usually in such shape that a sufficiently nervy person, clambering down the steep, boulder-strewn slope, can penetrate far into their winding depths. Therein lies their menace.

The site of the old Last Chance was soon overgrown with weeds and brush, but the underground drifts never filled with water as so many old workings do. They were drained by other and deeper mines some distance away. It was in this condition that James Cavanaugh found the old mine and decided to investigate it. Dauntlessly he penetrated its silent, threatening depths and carefully examined the drifts. His years of experience and the veteran miner's sixth sense told him that there was still a body of rich ore somewhere within reach. In hourly danger of being crushed to death he started in to "prospect" the mine.

The only girl lead miner has courageously wrested a tidy fortune from the "Last Chance," the Kansas mine that killed her father.

Jessie, his twenty-two year old daughter, insisted on helping her father. The family needed the money badly, and her father could not afford to hire help. So she toiled away manfully day after day, wrestling buckets of lead ore out of the dangerous shaft. They sold the ore to a near-by smelter for enough to keep the family alive. In a short time the continual toil had made Jessie not only an expert with a pick and shovel but also proficient in the handling of dynamite.

Then the jaws of this monster, out of which they were wrenching a precarious living, closed with a snap. In that country the slippery soapstone is a stealthy peril that miners are always facing. It makes no sound when it is splitting loose from its rocky bed and it strikes

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She Hunts Devil-Fishes

"ALL this talk about the devil-fish being so terrible is pure bunk!" declares Mrs. Luvina Hause of Salmon Beach, Washington. Mrs. Hause speaks with authority because during their season—April to November—catching the uncanny creature is her specialty. Throughout this period hardly a day passes that she does not get into her rowboat, armed with a stout gaff-hook and set forth to return some hours later, accompanied by anywhere from one to seven of the wriggling horrors.

"But I don't mind that a bit," Mrs. Hause insists. "You see a devil-fish hasn't any teeth, so it can't bite and while there are hundreds of suckers on its arms, they are like vacuum cups. They can fasten only to something solid like rock or wood or to parts of the body where bare flesh is exposed. Of course I take care they don't get a hold on my hands, but if they should, the worst they can do is to raise a blood blister. Landing one of them after it has been gaffed is as thrilling a sport as I can imagine, for a devil-fish certainly puts up a stiff fight!"

"What do you do with them after you've caught them?" the writer inquired.

"Sell them. There is a ready market for all I can supply. The Chinese and Japanese consider them a great delicacy. Did you ever eat any?"

"Eat devil-fish! Why I wouldn't eat any for a million dollars!" Again Mrs. Hause smiled.

"Chop-suey is awfully good, don't you think?" she asked quite innocently.

"Yes, it's delicious. Very often I drop into one of the Chinese restaurants for some." The expert with a gaff-hook laughed outright.

"Then you've eaten devil-fish—plenty of it! That tender white meat in chop-suey which you supposed was bits of pork or chicken, is nothing more nor less than devil-fish.

"Why shouldn't we eat devil-fish?" she demanded. "They're cleaner in their habits than a lot of *critters* we do eat—chickens for instance. An octopus is very particular about its food."

Less than five years ago Mrs. Hause was an invalid—one of the sort doctors gravely shake their heads over. Her physician told her that if she didn't get out of an apartment house and spend most of her time in the open air . . . With her husband and small son, she moved to Salmon Beach one of the suburban summer resorts of Tacoma. From an old man known as "devil-fish Pete," she learned that the Orientals were eager to pay ten cents a pound for all the live devil-fish they could get and she determined to try her luck at coping with the "terrible" and "uncanny" octopus.

"I'd a lot rather gaff devil-fish than wash dishes," says Mrs. Luvina Hause of Salmon Beach. She makes her job pay very well.

"I soon found he isn't so terrible as he is supposed to be and not the least bit uncanny," the fisherwoman stated with her ready smile.

Besides having completely regained her health Mrs. Hause has decidedly improved the family finances. Her records show that during the height of the season she has made as high as $75 a month and that she averages between $40 and $50. The day she was visited by the writer she had just returned from her fishing-grounds with one octopus weighing forty-eight pounds and four smaller ones ranging from fifteen to twenty-five pounds each, at ten cents per pound.

"I'd a lot rather gaff devil-fish than wash dishes," was her parting assurance, "even if I didn't make a penny on them. There are positively no thrills to be had in dish-washing but believe me, there are no end of them in devil-fishing, and thrills are what we're all hunting for these days."

—Bertha Snow Adams.

Everybody's Chestnut Tree

Editor's Note: Though the sign is the Chestnut Tree, no story is barred by its youth. We will gladly pay for available ones. Address all manuscripts to "The Chestnut Tree," enclosing stamped addressed envelope.

A Human Rat Trap

A reward of fifty dollars was being offered to rid a pest-ridden town of rats. One day a fellow showed up who claimed to be a regular professional rat killer. They told him to go to it. He asked for a pound of cheese which was promptly provided. Then he wanted a quart of whisky and some pre-war stock was raided for the necessary quart. The expert went down into the first cellar on which he was to start operations with the cheese and the whisky. About an hour elapsed when all at once the ratter expert bounded up the steps. His face was red, his eyes were glaring and he was shaking his fists at the world. As he jumped high in the air he shouted:

"Whoopee! I'm ready. Now bring on your rats!"

Perfect Team Work

Uncle Dick Howell, down in the Carolina Smokies, was for many years a familiar figure at the little county-seat village whenever court was in sesssion. He always made the journey in an old two-wheeled cart drawn by a blind mule and a long-horned brindle bull, yoked together as only a mountaineer knows how. Uncle Dick was inordinately proud of this unusual equipage and never tired of boasting of the merits of his team.

"I've got the travelinest animules that ever had geers on 'em," he would assert. "I kin naturely go any place whar beas-es kin navigate. I kin git to places whar nary a mule team nor hoss team kin go a-tall!"

"How do you manage that, Uncle Dick?" the village postmaster asked the mountaineer one day.

"Well, Mister, hit's thisaway: the mule, he can't *see* where he's a-goin', an' the bull, he don't *give* a damn!"

Beau Brummel Rebuffed

When the Honorable J. Hamilton Lewis, later conceded to be the best dressed man in Congress was a young lawyer in Illinois, his reputation as a fancy dresser was even then widespread.

He acted as prosecuting attorney at a trial held in what was then the backwoods of the state. The counsel for the defense was a veritable Abe Lincoln—extremely homely, with little thought for tonsorial correctness.

The trial dragged on for many days. Morning after morning the principals and the spectators filed into the dingy courtroom. The prosecuting attorney was always late. He would saunter in, lay down his walking stick, his gray fedora, and his gray suède gloves, flick an imaginary speck from his gray suit, and say with a deep bow, "Good morning, Judge. Good morning, gentlemen of the jury." With only the slightest inclination of his head in the direction of the counsel for the defense,. he would add, "Morning, Gibbs."

The next morning he would repeat his courtly salutations to the judge and the jury, and his contemptuous greeting to the uncouth Mr. Gibbs, as he removed his brown fedora and brown suède gloves, and flicked an imaginary speck from his brown suit.

So it went for many days. One morning toward the end of the trial, the backwoods lawyer took occasion to arrive even later than his handsome opponent, which was late enough. His trousers bagged, his shoes were dusty, and his beard was four days old.

"Good morning, Judge," he said, sweeping very low, "Good morning, gentlemen of the jury."

And then, with arms outstretched to the prosecuting attorney, he pleaded, "Kiss me, darlin'!"

A Problem for Nurmi

A new teacher in the backwoods district gave her pupils this problem to work out over the week end: "If a man can run around a field, one mile square, in thirty-seven minutes, how long will it take him to run around eleven and three-quarter times?"

Monday morning little Jerry Merrit came to school with the following note:

"Deer techer,

jerry ant got his problum yit. It tooken all the morning satday to git a mile square mesered off. jerry ant no man so his pap tried hit, but he onli got around onct when he was tooken with fits and had to stop. Then jerry's grandpap tried hit and run hisself plumb down in the lines befoar he gotten haf way around. Hes still in bed awful bad off.

Yisterdy jerry's pap got outen bed thogh it nerly kilt him to do hit and wint cler around the mountin to git jerry's cuzin Jake which is a yung man that is a turible good runner. Jake started out erli this morning and expex to make it sometime befoar midnight, though he sed it wud be hard goin. So if he gits thrugh all rite jerry will have his problum tomorra. But pleze techer give jerry some problums for boys or women to do next time. I ant got no time to wast nether but I cud manage better'n the men folks, ez they cant afford to lose there days work very offen.

Hoping you will excuze jerry this time,
Mrs. Sophronia Merrit."

Far Too Faithful

A mountaineer and his eldest son were coming down to pay their annual visit to the little village at the foot of the mountain, where a county road had just been put through.

As they rounded the last curve in the winding trail some tourists in an automobile dashed by on the main road. The father and son never having seen anything like this before, watched it with open-mouthed curiosity, neither saying a word. Just as it roared around the curve, the county's new speed cop whizzed past on a motorcycle hot after it. This was too much.

"Well, by gol'," exclaimed the father, "who'd a thunk that thing had a colt."

An Odious Comparison

A live-wire salesman rushed up to the home of a doctor in a small village late one night and asked him to come at once to a distant town.

The doctor cranked up his flivver and they drove furiously to their destination. Upon their arrival the salesman asked, "How much is your fee, doctor?"

"Three dollars," said the physician.

"Here you are," said the salesman, handing over the money. "The blamed garage keeper wanted $15.00 to drive me over, when I missed my train."

Too Hot To File

The Track Supervisor of a Western road received the following note from one of his track foremen:

"I am sending in the accident report on Casey's foot when he struck it with the spike maul. Now, under 'Remarks', do you want mine or do you want Casey's?"

Direct To Consumer

A dusky lady hurried into the drug store the other day and said she wanted a cent's worth of insect powder.

"But, lady," said the druggist, "that's not enough to wrap up."

"Man," exclaimed the lady, "Ah doesn't axe you to do no wrappin' up—jus' blow it down mah back."

Give It A Chance

It was a sleepy village and its fire brigade was anything but up-to-date. One night a fire was announced by the violent ringing of the alarm bell, and the sleepy brigade arrived at the scene of the action to find the burning building a mass of smoke. No flames were visible from the outside.

The captain made a careful survey. Then he lit his pipe and started to smoke.

"We'd better leave it alone and let it burn up a bit," he said. "Then we'll be able to see what we are doing."

Oh, Professor!

The well-known absent-minded professor kept in his cellar a small stock of excellent old wine to be used only on those rare occasions when hospitality demanded it. Such an occasion arose one day while the rest of the household, consisting of the professor's wife and young daughter, were absent on a shopping expedition. The professor hied him to the cellar, whence he presently emerged, carrying a dusty bottle and two glasses on a tray. He filled the glasses and passed one to his caller, who accepted it with an air of mingled embarrassment and dubiety. The professor tossed off his own drink with evident relish, smacked his lips and made a pertinent remark about the very excellent flavor that age gives to real good wine.

At this moment the door opened and the professor's wife and daughter came in. The wife took in the situation at a glance. She snatched the glass away from the startled visitor and her husband and carried the tray swiftly out of the room.

"Mary," she said to her little daughter, "for heaven's sake, run down to the cellar and bring up a bottle of wine, and put this bluing back on the laundry shelf."

The Black Stamp

[*Continued from page 63*]

the vanished steel king, and placed it across the key. Then, to Henry's great surprise, he forced his knife into the woodwork at the joint between door frame and wall, and gave it a twist. At once the door frame opened on a hidden hinge and the whole structure swung inward. Disher turned triumphantly.

"You see!" he cried. "I knew it! That's how Hamilton Harris was spirited away! The thread did not fall from the key when the door was opened simply because the door was not opened. I said so all along. But the door and door frame together were opened. Astonishingly simple."

As Disher gently closed the aperture Henry Moon whistled and stuck his hands in his pockets.

"So that's how he was taken? And now—"

"What?"

"Now to find where he was taken to."

"Quite. But come. We must hurry back to New York and do certain things in a hurry."

Wearing a crestfallen look for the benefit of the police at the door, Disher took Henry's arm and they returned to the train. Arrived at the Pennsylvania Station he called a taxi, but put out his arm as Henry was about to step in.

"Not you," he said. "I want you to go down to the shipping office and book six tickets for Europe, by the *Atlantic*. She sails tomorrow."

"*Six* tickets?"

"Then you heard me the first time," said Disher, stepping into the taxi.

The taxi took him to a shop in an obscure street where he bought a formidable bundle of European papers; and then back to Washington Square. He smiled at the spectacle of the faithful Spotty as he entered the house.

Anna rose wearily when he went into the sitting-room. "Is he still there?" And she went to the window to see. With a sigh she turned away and sat again.

"Where is Henry?" she asked.

"Booking our passages to Southampton," Disher replied. "We sail tomorrow."

"Tomorrow? But—I have only just arrived."

"Is there any reason why we should stay? Henry is returning tomorrow. He must."

"If you will get rid of that odious creature outside for me," she said, "I will go out and cable to my father that I am returning."

"I shall be cabling to England this afternoon," said Disher. "Let me do it for you."

She looked up swiftly.

"Or—" she hesitated. "I could send a message from the boat?"

"Miss Copeland," said he abruptly, "why did you come to New York?"

"I have already told you," she answered.

"What you told me was this: that having read in the English newspapers that we were here in America, you followed us for the purpose of informing Henry that you had changed your mind and would marry him."

"Which is true. I know you don't believe me, but it is true."

"The first mention in an English newspaper of my being in America occurred in the *Telegraph* on the morning of the 19th. The *Megania* sailed on the previous afternoon—the 18th. Why did you lie about that—or, if you prefer it, why did you commit that blunder in tactics? It was careless of you, Miss Copeland. To make the point plainer, you got your information not from a newspaper but from a spy."

She stared at him in amazement.

"You are, of course," said Disher, "free to leave this house, if you so desire. But I would not advise you to do so. I am not a fool, and you, like most other people, know it. Any step you might take would be futile. If you communicated with England so should I, and I warn you that the result of my communication would be drastic. If, on the other hand, you care to place yourself in my care—"

Anna turned from the door and came back into the center of the room.

"You have got me checked," she said curtly.

"Checkmated, rather," said Disher, "as I checkmated your brother."

The effect of these words astounded Disher. Anna sat suddenly and burst into tears, at which Disher immediately walked away and stood before the window.

"Where is he?" she asked at length.

"At least I can say that he is quite safe," replied Disher, returning to her side. "He will travel back to England with us tomorrow."

BEFORE leaving the boat, at Southampton, Disher entrusted Spotty M'Gee with a mission. "I want you," he said, taking Spotty aside, "to take the first train to town and go through into East Kent. This ordnance map will show you your way about. Find the registrar for the Isle of Sheppey—that's Sheppey, there, just off the mainland, in the estuary. His office is probably in Sheerness. Find out from him, without arousing his suspicions, exactly how many people have died in Thames Town since July first of this year. Get to know all you can about them—where they came from, and that sort of thing; and then, if possible, trace them back to some place before they came to Sheppey. Now, wait." He took a railway guide from his pocket and began to turn the pages.

"I'm sending for a car and the rest of us will go on through Winchester and Guildford to Canterbury. We shall stay at—" running his fingers down a column of advertisements—"at The Pilgrims. Not that I know anything about The Pilgrims, but the advertisement claims that it has a telephone in each guest-room. The number is Canterbury X555. Make a note of it. And as soon as you have anything to report, call up there at once. We shall reach Canterbury, I expect, early tomorrow morning. Now, are you clear on every point?"

"Hu-huh," said Spotty, to whom speech was still either precious or painful.

The meal in the garish dining-room of the suburban hotel was a dismal ceremony. Nobody had anything to say. Henry Moon sat next to young Copeland, while Anna in the opposite corner was inconspicuously hemmed in by the "lady friend" of Mr. M'Gee's—a cheerful if sophisticated young woman known as Cora Gilfin.

The dismal dinner had not got far along when an excited man rushed into the dining-room with a copy of the *Argus*.

He talked unintelligibly but Disher saw the headline which was the cause of his emotion.

Editor of *Monitor* Vanishes

He sent an agitated waiter for a copy of the *Argus*, and on the man's return hurriedly scanned the latest sensation.

Mr. "Ducky" Springfield had been spirited away by the Black Stamp. On the previous morning he had received the usual grim warning, but he had treated it not only with contempt but with loud laughter. He would like, he had declared, to see the Black Stamp take *him;* and twenty-four hours had passed uneventfully. Then, at noon of the present day, he had entered his car to be driven home for lunch to his house at Hampstead, as was his daily custom. As a special precaution, after the warning, the doors of his car had been fitted with locks, and he and his driver armed. He had locked himself in and the driver had not stopped on the way; but when the car reached Hampstead, though the doors were still locked, Mr. Springfield was gone. No message had since been received from him; no trace of him had been found.

ON THE day following their arrival Disher sat alone in an upper room of The Pilgrims Tavern.

A gentle knock sounded on the stout panel of the old door. Disher opened the door and found Anna Copeland outside.

"May I come in?" she asked pleasantly.

"Do." And he stood aside.

"One cannot quarrel for ever," she said.

"Do we quarrel?" Disher asked. "I don't think so. We are on opposite sides in a fight, that is all. I regret it, of course, but it is unavoidable. I don't see why we should not be quite friendly, between the rounds."

"I have been thinking much the same thing, Mr. Disher," said Anna.

Disher waited.

"I wondered," said Anna, "if you would like to see the evening paper. It has just come in."

"Thank you."

He unfolded it and drew his chair up under the old-fashioned gas-jet.

The two middle columns on the front page of the *Evening Monitor* had been thrown into one, and here was set, in large type, the following;

A STATEMENT

The directorate of "Monitor Newspapers Ltd." have decided after the most serious consideration to give the fullest publicity to the following communication. This was received on Monday morning, the 19th. inst., by the Editor of the "Daily Monitor," Mr. Edgar Springfield, at his office in Monitor House. It came by mail, bearing a West Central postmark. The original is typewritten.

Mr. Springfield, as is well known to our many readers, has for many weeks been the leading inspiration of the campaign to uncover the identity of the members of the organization which has become so notorious under the name of The Black Stamp. The receipt of the letter, therefore, did not come exactly as a surprise to him. He treated the letter with scorn, proposing to make no other move than to double the efforts he was already making. It will be seen that the unknown writer makes a particular demand: that the letter be at once published in our columns. Mr. Springfield stoutly refused to be intimidated. He did not publish the letter, but locked it away in his desk. He was given one day in which to change his mind, but he did not change it. Yesterday morning, he disappeared in the most extraordinary circumstances.

Following is a copy of the letter received here by Mr. Springfield.

"*To the* Editor of the *Daily Monitor*.

DEAR SIR:

You are commanded to publish immediately in your columns this communication.

The Black Stamp organization does not exist for the purpose of creating terror, but to allay it. It performs a public service of an international kind such as has never before been attempted in history. The following facts about some of its so-called 'victims' may be of interest at this point in our campaign.

Albert Talbot was a wife-beater, a drunkard and libertine.

Mark Amber, so far from being the respectable public figure that he is credited with being, was a secret usurer who had made of moneylending something almost akin to blackmail. His private books, together with a list of his victims, have come to our notice and are being forwarded by us to Scotland Yard. They prove that he has by his methods of extortion amassed a fortune of several thousands of pounds during the past three years. His respectable public life in Broadstairs was merely a blind.

M. Lemère, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, was in our opinion a menace to humanity. Unknown to his colleagues, he was secretly plotting to bring about a state of war between his own country and one with which it has always been on the most friendly terms. Documentary proof of this we are also forwarding to the proper authorities.

Also we have definite proof that Martin Cole, the Member for West Lowestoft, in his recent capacity as Town Councillor, has been guilty of converting public funds to his own use.

Andrew McPherson, the Perth innkeeper, has been systematically giving short measure of all the beverages supplied by him for the past eighteen months.

Senator Maggsley, of Washington, has been the prime factor in the 'War with England' party in America since its inception. This war, should it ever take place, will have been a purely artificially-created catastrophe, and any one siding in its creation is a menace that must be removed.

Hamilton Harris has done more to destroy the good relations, so necessary at this period of industrial history, between employers and employed, than any man of his generation. We venture to describe him as the perfect reactionary.

Cole's offence against civilization will be patent and needs no retailing here.

Against our other so-called 'victims' similar damning evidence can be given, and will be supplied in due course if the necessity arises.

The Black Stamp holds a brief for no class. It removes Hamilton Harris, the strike-breaker of Pittsburg, as it removes Henry Borwitt the strike-maker of Newcastle. It claims rich and poor, the near and the distant. It takes the wrong-doer of every rank, and without discrimination. The punishment is the same for all—obliteration. None of these 'victims' will be heard of again. They are gone for ever.

The Black Stamp is ever watchful. None can hope to evade it. It sees the swindling innkeeper in Perth as surely as the drug-trafficker in Buenos Ayres and the wife-beater in Kentish Town. No wrong-doer is safe from its activities. But the good man need not fear it.

You are commanded to perform the act of public service of publishing this communication exactly as it stands and at once. Failure to do so will speedily be punished by our usual means."

This letter bore no signature, but a black stamp was affixed where the signature might be looked for. We publish it without comment. At the moment of going to press no news of Mr. Springfield has been received.

Disher laid the paper down and stared at the slim figure of Anna Copeland, still standing at the window across the room, watching the picturesque pageant of small-town life go by. He bit off the end of a fresh cigar and reached for a match. She had heard the paper laid on the table, but she did not move. Disher did not speak. He frowned at the cigar and stuck it back between his teeth. Then he rose and began to pace restlessly up and down the room.

At last Anna looked round and tried to smile.

"Good and bad," she murmured unsteadily, "may sometimes be very difficult to distinguish when—when one doesn't know."

He stopped pacing and stood and looked at her.

"Miss Copeland." He spoke sharply as he came forward. "Will you answer a question?"

"If I can."

"I think you can. Do you remember a morning, a month ago, when I gathered daisies on the beach before your house?"

"Why yes."

"It might have seemed to you a foolish thing to do, but I never do foolish things. There was human blood on those daisies. There was human blood on many daisies about that beach. There were marks of a mighty struggle there. Afterwards I had the daisies tested. Somebody died strangely on the Isle of Sheppey about that time. I have caused inquiries to be made. So far as the authorities can tell us there has been only one death there. A young man died on the day that Albert Talbot returned to Lant's Buildings and began to behave so strangely. That young man's name was Roy Way. Perhaps you knew him?"

She was staring at him wildly. Her lips parted and she tried to speak. But before she could reply there was the sound of footsteps on the stairs outside; the door opened and Spotty M'Gee, looking very disgusted, stepped nimbly in.

"Well," said Disher, temporarily ignoring Anna, "what have you learned?"

Briefly Spotty rehearsed his adventures. He had gone to Sheerness directly upon leaving the boat and, under cover of darkness, had invaded the office of the district registrar and examined the records. There had been but one death recorded since July 1—that of Roy Way, a chauffeur, of Sundial Cottage, Thames Town. The informant had been Dr. James Percy, the deceased's employer of the same address. From there, at daybreak, Spotty had gone to Sundial Cottage and stared at the purple car in the garage until he felt sure of recognizing it, should he see it again. Later, while walking on the Leysdown Road, he had heard a car approaching and, seeing it to be the doctor's, had stopped it and at the point of his revolver, had wormed what information he wanted from the startled Dr. Percy. Roy Way had been his chauffeur, he admitted, until the time of his death. Before that, he had worked for a Dr. Briggs of Epping. Turning the doctor over to a confederate, Spotty had gone to Epping and there made a remarkable discovery.

"Yuh talk about things!" he exclaimed. "I gotter know every leaf in that blamed forest. I'll say I found the Blue Tiles and the red tiles and every other blamed colored tiles there was. I found every blamed doctor. I'll tell you this—that blamed Roy Way just isn't! He's what you call a myth! He just never existed, Cap'n. He's the man that never was."

Disher shot a sharp glance at Anna.

"Well?" he said.

But she did not reply. Spotty M'Gee, nimble as ever, caught her as she was falling.

ANNA was keeping to her room, seeing nobody, under the care of Cora Gilfin. Disher was standing in the lobby of The Pilgrims Tavern, awaiting a reply to a telegram he had sent off some two hours previously. The rest were gathered in the smoking room, keeping watch on Philip Copeland. In addition to Henry Moon and Spotty M'Gee there was Mangan—a keen but unobtrusive man of forty. It was now four o'clock on Saturday afternoon.

For the first time since his capture in New York, Philip Copeland seemed to be in good spirits. This was due to the presence of Mason Snow, the schoolmaster of Kentish Town, who had run into Disher and his party while seeking lunch at the Inn.

That he had automatically become a prisoner he had not yet discovered.

Disher seemed to have taken on added magnificence. This came from his realization that the solution of the Black Stamp mystery was almost at hand. He smiled in a superior manner and he was even undisturbed at the sudden appearance of Cora announcing that Anna had escaped.

Instead of reproving her, as she expected, he instructed her to round up the others, including the schoolmaster, and bring them to his room.

When they were all assembled there Disher issued his orders.

"Henry Moon and Spotty will come with me. Mangan and Cora will remain to entertain our guests, Mr. Copeland and Mr. Snow. If either of them should attempt to get out of this room Mangan will know what to do. I shall most likely telephone further instructions in an hour or so. Spotty! Henry!"

Down in the lobby Disher and Henry studied a large wall map of the country while Spotty prepared the big car and brought it around into High Street before the hotel door.

"There's a choice of ways," said Disher. "The only thing we're sure of is that Anna is going towards Whitstable. The way she's taking we don't know. But the road through the woods here will be quieter and we shall most likely save time by going that way. Come on."

Once in the open country they went forward with the speed of a bullet. They reached the highest point of the hills and came out upon a rough and open path, bracken-covered and shaded here and there by sparse pines. Far below was the first glimpse of the sea. It needed but an hour or two to sunset and the great red craftsman in the western sky was turning the autumn woods to a fairyland beaten out of choice metals by his sensitive hands.

However, it was not the stage but the two solitary actors upon it that claimed Disher's attention. Half a mile across the heath a taxicab was ditched, and its driver and a flame-haired girl stood helplessly beside it, staring at the wreck.

Both girl and driver looked round as the great car came to a standstill, and Anna Copeland flushed scarlet when Disher raised his hat and smiled.

"Why, Miss Copeland!" said the latter, alighting. "It seems that I have come along very opportunely. My car is at your service."

"Thanks," said Anna coldly.

"I got to walk back into Canterbury and get summun to come out an' gimme a 'and with this," the driver grumbled, indicating the dislocated taxicab.

"In that case," said Disher, "perhaps you would not mind calling at The Pilgrims in High Street and informing Mr. Mangan, whom you will find there, that I shall be glad if he and his friends will follow me into Whitstable by taxi, at once."

He turned to the girl.

"May I ask if you succeeded in telephoning your father?"

"I certainly did," Anna retorted.

Disher nodded and held open the door of his car; he was standing aside for Anna to enter when suddenly up the road another car came in sight. In it were T. C. Copeland, Clift, the one-time mute, and Evered, the butler. At the sight of Disher and Anna the car stopped dead. T. C. Copeland gasped, stared, then fumbled for the handle and sprang out.

"Why—"

"I find your daughter," said Disher languidly, "the victim of a slight accident. The taxicab in which she was coming to you has fallen foul of a dry ditch. Its pilot—a man of crude intelligence and the most astounding ignorance—has gone back to Canterbury for assistance, and I was about to drive Miss Copeland as far as Whitstable in my own car. Perhaps you, too, would honor me by joining us?"

"Er—thanks," said Copeland. He glanced at Clift, and Clift prepared to turn the second car round.

But before very much could be accomplished in this direction the nerves of Henry Moon, long overstrung from the strain of occupying both sides of a thankless fence, seemed to snap. He had been discreet and cautious for so many miserable weeks, that now his only thought was to fling all caution to the winds to save his sanity. Ever since a certain night on far-away Washington Heights he had wanted to shout. Now he shouted.

"Stop!" And he ran across the road and gripped the wrist of the astonished Clift. "You go when we go!" he cried.

"What is this?" Copeland demanded.

"We—we—we suspect this—this French-speaking mute—of being concerned in the disappearance of the French Foreign Minister, M. Lemère!"

He swung round and enjoyed to the full the looks of amazement that he had brought to all the other faces there. He lived through the moment in highest triumph. Then he turned and pointed a sensational finger at Evered.

"As for Mr. Mark Amber's so-called butler—"

Disher strolled elegantly forward and placed his hand on Henry's shoulder.

"You are making, my dear Henry," he drawled, "a fool of yourself. As usual. Our friend Clift here *is* M. Lemère!"

The man at the wheel of Copeland's car seemed to subside like a summer breeze. His mouth opened and closed again, for now he was mute indeed. The bushy eyebrows of T. C. Copeland lifted and lost some of their geniality. But his daughter Anna was staring at Disher with the frankest admiration.

"To use your words," Disher continued—" 'as for Mr. Mark Amber's so-called butler.' It grieves me to have to announce that our excellent Evered has sunk into deceit so far as to pass under a name which is not his own. His name is not Evered at all. His name is Mark Amber."

"What!" Henry was the only one to speak. "Oh, my good Lord!" he cried. And then the heavy moments began to pass.

Presently T. C. Copeland stirred and passed a hand across his eyes.

"What are you going to do now?" he asked of Disher. "Where are you going? Where—*were* you going?"

"I *was* going," said Disher, "into Whitstable and across to the dreary island where you pass your days like other people's nights. To Thames Town. As a matter of fact, to Thames Town's churchyard."

And as still nobody spoke, he added:

"To inspect the grave of Albert Talbot."

"Well? And what do you propose to do?"

"I am young enough," Disher replied, "still to prefer life with the limelight and the incidental music. I propose, therefore, to talk."

He waved a hand in the direction of a little hollow across the heath, where under a feeble pine tree lay a fallen log. "Let us first sit," he suggested. And he claimed the fallen log as he might have claimed a throne and the others gathered round him.

"The first event of any importance that I discovered was the dismissal of the butler, Evered, by Mr. Renton Yates of Fitzjohn's Avenue, three years ago.

"I flatter myself that there are very few people who could discover the significance of this episode; and yet we might say that it holds the key to the whole of the mystery. We find that Evered was dismissed for fighting with his employer's son in a quarrel following on a difference of political opinion. We learn this *from Evered himself*. He makes no attempt to hide it. Nor did he attempt to hide it at the time. When he took his next situation—with Mrs. Broderick of Kensington—he did not try to keep dark the facts about his dismissal from Hampstead. With the help of friends he might very easily have maneuvered false references. But he did not do this. He told Mrs. Broderick, as later he told me, the truth about the matter. Evered, indeed, appears to have had a passion for the truth.

"And I, an essentially simple soul, see at once the truth to be the truth and nothing but the truth. I am interested by the resolution on the part of Mrs. Broderick to employ this candidly unsatisfactory butler—for an unsatisfactory butler Evered certainly is. She keeps this amazingly candid butler for six months until as she, lying nobly, informed me, she can afford to keep him no longer. And then Evered moves along to the next step on our line of events. He becomes butler to Mr. Mark Amber of Broadstairs.

"Mr. Mark Amber of Broadstairs is in one particular at any rate a very remarkable man. He appears to have been about forty-six years of age on the day he was born. I have caused wide enquiries to be made about Mr. Mark Amber, but I have failed utterly to find any trace of his existence before he came to Broadstairs. He began to exist at about the same time that Evered began to be his butler. And he was careful to keep his personal staff at Thanet Towers so small in number that nobody had the opportunity to suspect that it was even one less than it seemed to be. Nobody had the opportunity to discover that Mr. Mark Amber and his new butler were the same man. There was nobody to see them sufficiently long to remark on the fact that they were never seen together.

"Mr. Mark Amber, then, continued to be both himself and his butler for three years, before he became notorious by ceasing to exist as his butler's employer. It is obvious that the impersonation was necessary for the success of some plot or other, and the time over which it was undertaken and the remarkable patience of the man in undertaking it shows that it was a plot of quite considerable magnitude. Mark Amber was content to wait three years for its fulfilment. It is clear, then, that he was waiting for no small thing.

"A question here arises. Evered was a poor man. Where did he obtain the large sums of money necessary to his masquerade as Mark Amber of Broadstairs? And there is something else about this dual individual that is rather fascinating. The truth about Mark Amber's secret activities is now well known. Evered was a very good man, even if he was a very indifferent butler. But the moment he became Mark Amber he became a blood-sucking scoundrel. Why?

"The next noteworthy thing with regard to this plot happened two years ago. It happened thousands of miles away. It happened to the renowned steel king, Hamilton Harris of Pittsburg and New York City.

"Two years ago a change came over him. From being perhaps the most humane employer in the United States he became the meanest. His notoriety exceeded his earlier fame. He became universally hated. And the most remarkable thing about this change in him is that there was apparently no reason for it. There was, at any rate, no explanation.

"About this time, too, M. Lemère, the French Minister on my right here, a most estimable gentleman until then, commenced to secretly plot war with a friendly country and to openly preach reaction of the most doubtful kind. He became, as he has been described, a menace to humanity. Mr. Martin Cole, the member for West Lowestoft, a scrupulously honest man hitherto, became a crook. In remote Perth, Andrew McPherson began to juggle with his beer measures. Senator Maggsley of Washington, after fifty years of good-natured homeliness, rose in a towering passion and wanted a war with England. All these people suddenly became bad men, some of an almost incredible badness. But the vital thing about them that *I* discovered was that *until they became very, very bad they were all of them very, very good*. And they all changed at about the same time. It was almost as if they had linked themselves together into a Brotherhood of Evil.

"We now come to Mr. Albert Talbot, and here we find ourselves in the company of a gentleman of very different kidney from the others. Life is too short for us to trace Mr. Talbot's history back to the time when he was good. I doubt if ever he was good. But that aside. Toward the end of June Albert decided to spend a week at Southend without his wife, and I here propose to state briefly what, in my opinion, happened to Albert during that holiday. If I am wrong, I beg that you put me right at once.

"The lovable Albert, then, went to Southend. After a day or two he hired a boat and went for a row. The boatman from whom the boat was hired, informs me that Albert Talbot did not return for some days. I will venture the opinion that Albert Talbot did not return at all. He landed on the Isle of Sheppey. He died on the Isle of Sheppey and was buried there. But the name on his grave is that of Roy Way. Am I right?"

Copeland stirred in the bracken and nodded.

"Remarkable," said Disher. "However, to proceed. Four or five days afterwards one of your artist friends, who happened by the rarest of luck to somewhat resemble the late Talbot, and who was familiar with his circumstances, dressed himself in Albert's clothes and returned to Southend in Albert's boat, making, however, the mistake of taking back with him a strange pair of oars, which is one of the minor clues I happened upon. The next day he went 'home' to Lant's Buildings. He was already familiar with Lant's Buildings—had been, I venture to suggest, for a day or two, in another guise. But he went back this time as Albert Talbot, and in order to keep alive the belief that Albert was alive too it was necessary for him to be connected with Lant's Buildings, as Albert, for quite a considerable time. To remain in the flat as Mrs. Talbot's husband was too dangerous; and so he proceeded to make a wreck of all the windows in the court and was taken to prison and kept there for a fortnight, which helped both himself and the belief in Albert's existence remarkably well. Everybody was satisfied that it was just like Albert to be in prison for a fortnight. This was a subtle character touch, indeed.

"Now it was during this fortnight that the Black Stamp was first heard of. Friends in Sheppey wrote a letter to the spurious Albert, informing him that the world was too good a place for him to live in, and that unless he mended his ways he must leave it. 'Albert' came out of prison, read the letter, and proceeded to conduct himself with even less citizenship than before. He was, therefore, immediately 'claimed' by the Black Stamp organization—his friends. There were hereabouts two very important clues that I shortly afterwards discovered. In all the fortnight after his return from Southend Mrs. Talbot did not actually *see* her 'husband,' add all the occasions together, for more than perhaps five minutes. And a police report informed me that the mysterious Black Stamp letter had been posted in Kensington—where Mrs. Broderick lived and Evered had once been employed.

"Now as to the actual disappearance. During the days following his 'vanishing' dozens of people must have thoroughly examined Talbot's flat. I was one of them. But I was a different one. I was the simplest of the lot. 'If,' I argued, 'Albert Talbot couldn't have been spirited out of his flat, then, quite plainly, he *wasn't* spirited out of his flat.' This was the simple explanation, but it was too simple for the rest of the world. Throughout this case I have worked on a basic fact. I have said, persistently, to myself, 'These people are not spirited away. They simply could not be.' From the very beginning I have worked on that.

"The spurious Talbot was in the room until the moment his 'wife' unlocked the door of the flat. He must have been, for there was no way in which he could have got out. But when his wife admitted Pat Brady and they searched the room he was nowhere to be seen. Outside there was Briggs the sign-writer and various other neighbors coming upstairs and downstairs. It was argued that if Albert had gone out through the door he must have been seen by these neighbors and most certainly by Briggs the sign-writer. Therefore (so the popular reasoning) he cannot have gone out through the door. I say he did. I say he hid behind the door and went out while Mrs. Talbot and Pat Brady were lighting the gas. I say that the reason Briggs the sign-writer did not see him was because he *was* Briggs the sign-writer. Am I right again?"

Once more Copeland nodded, and at this Disher sighed.

"Well . . . 'Albert' vanished, and in the beginning of August I came to Seasalter and you began to make your astounding series of mistakes. You made the first mistake of believing I had come to Seasalter because of you. You aroused my suspicions by permitting your own suspicions to be aroused. As a matter of fact I had no definite suspicion about anything until that time.

"Afterwards you committed the second mistake of inventing the distinguished Pottar. Oh yes, we have known of the vicar's amusing—and nearly successful—escapade for quite a long time. Henry Moon, in fact, was present at Mr. Pottar's 'death.' Much later you made a still more serious mistake. You were persuaded that I had my suspicions about you and that I was decidedly skeptical about the powers of the Black Stamp. You arranged that I should have the opportunity to prove to myself that the Black Stamp had this power to actually spirit a man away. You arranged for Hamilton Harris to send for me. And he arranged the door of his suite so that he could indeed disappear from under my very nose. It was very neatly done; but I never left the suite alone until I had discovered the secret of the Black Stamp. I had had a vague suspicion for some time to the effect that at least Albert Talbot, or the man who posed as him, had 'vanished' from Lant's Buildings of his own free will. Now I had proof that Hamilton Harris had done this. And so I stumbled on the keystone that held this bewildering arch of so-called mysteries together. *The men behind the Black Stamp movement were the men who, one by one in different parts of the world, were disappearing! The 'victims' of the Black Stamp were the men who were organising it!* Right again? I thought so.

"Well, my dear Copeland, I will say this—that I think your aim is a praiseworthy aim. Death has ceased to be much of a terror on this earth. We all die, and the mere fact of death keeps back no man from crime and sin. But the thought that he is seen by invisible eyes and whisked off into the unknown in a flash, even through brick walls, and never seen again, might make the boldest evildoer pause. The thought that there is some power able to see the smallest act of ours, and punish evil here and now, in this life, would, I gladly agree, have a salutary effect on most people and make for a clearer human existence. You hit upon a big idea. You aimed to *frighten* the world into being a better place. And of course the only way in which the Black Stamp could create this belief in its power to claim its victims was by *providing* the victims, by itself being the victims. It was a gigantic hoax, of course, but a big idea, bigly conceived and carried out. I don't know that I disagree with your aims, or even of the means whereby you carry them into effect. But whether they would work with real victims—"

Copeland sat up quickly at this and flashed a triumphant glance round the little circle. From his pocket he dragged a newspaper.

"Tonight's *Star*," he said. "I bought it in Whitstable on my way here. Perhaps you have not seen it? Let me explain that yesterday our organization made its first real move. We sent a warning to one who is not of us, and it was the first one we have sent. As you have implied, all these months we have been merely preparing the public conscience throughout the world for the real thing. One man we have been watching in particular. In our unanimous opinion he above all men is a menace to civilization. That man is the Prime Minister, Spencer Charlott, a man who as surely as the sun rises would have had this nation embroiled in war with the United States before the end of this year if left to his own evil devices. To counterbalance him we set up one of our own men, Maggsley of Washington, and—vanished him, to put it that way. We let the world see plainly that the Black Stamp would not tolerate war between Britain and America. Then our letter appeared in the *Monitor*, putting the statement definitely in print, and threatening immediate punishment on all who disregarded the Black Stamp warning. Yesterday we sent that warning to Spencer Charlott. Today, as you will see by the *Star*, he has resigned. It is the first real move we have made. And it has succeeded."

"I see," said Disher.

It was like a "tag" at the end of a play. One by one the others rose and began to move towards the waiting cars across the heath. Copeland himself rose, a new man, a man with a load suddenly lifted from his mind. He smiled as Disher had first seen him smile.

"And now that all has been satisfactorily explained—"

He looked at Disher. And Disher, who alone had remained seated, looked at him.

"But all has not been satisfactorily explained," said the latter.

"What do you mean?"

"Exactly what I say. Come, my dear Copeland, I have had your son and daughter under observation ever since you sent the girl out to New York to weaken the enemy's force by marrying part of it—"

"But I did not send her!" Copeland protested. "She—she herself suggested that her marriage to Henry Moon might have the desired effect you have mentioned. She insisted on sacrificing herself for the cause, against my wishes, for I cannot say I have considered Henry Moon as a son-in-law. I scarcely know him. She really went to New York to discover why Philip's monthly report had not come through and why we did not hear from him."

"Permit me to finish," said Disher calmly. "I have had them under observation, and I have eyes with which to see. They did not merely resent me as one who might upset their father's plans to establish a premature Utopia. They feared me. *Feared* me, you understand. *Dreaded* that I would happen upon the truth. And so did you, until a very little while ago. Now. Are we going to have the whole truth, or not?"

"I—you mean Albert Talbot?" queried Copeland. "But I assure you that his death was no murder, if that is what you are thinking. We could have set our scheme in motion without Talbot. We used him as a convincing send-off, merely because there was no need for Mrs. Talbot to act, as William Baines and our other 'witnesses' would have to act. It made the whole thing more *real*. But Talbot himself died a natural death. He was attended in his last moments by Dr. Percy, and well attended too. He was thrown ashore in his boat in a violent storm, badly bleeding and only semi-conscious. Snow found him and brought him to my house. He was given every care, but we could not save him. You may be interested to learn that he was unrepentant to the last. He told us who he was and boasted of his misdeeds. Very early Dr. Percy feared that he would die, and because of this, after a hurried conference, one of our men was sent on the second morning to establish himself in Lant's Buildings as Briggs the sign-writer. But we certainly did not murder Talbot, and his body lies there in the churchyard to prove this, if proof should ever be necessary. Do you think that men with our ideals *would* murder to enforce them?"

"I never thought," said Disher, "that Talbot was murdered—at any rate, since very early in the case. That was not what I meant. Have you nothing more to tell me?"

"What else should I have to tell you?"

"That is precisely what I am asking you. All these things being true, you have nothing to fear from an inquiry into the cause of the death of Albert Talbot. But last night your daughter showed me the *Evening Monitor*, containing your letter to the editor, and appeared to think that explanation of your activities would suffice to turn me from an enemy into a friend. When I intimated that I still intended to probe the mystery of the non-existent Roy Way she fainted. She was *afraid*. Why? Because I might discover that Albert Talbot had died a natural death? No. She was afraid because she found that I was still upon your track, still pitted against you, still, as she thought, your enemy, resolved to track you down and down until I discovered—what?"

Copeland's eyes were on the rest of the party, now arrived at the cars and waiting. He lowered them, and when he looked up again it was at Disher.

"The truth," he answered firmly, "is known only to my mother, my son and my daughter besides myself. It is now going to be known to you as well." He suddenly sat and clasped his hands across his knees. "For seventeen years," he said, "I have been wanted in Kansas City as an escaped murderer.

"The law called it murder, but it was kill or be killed and I fought for my life. I had not a friend in the court at my trial. I do not believe I had a friend in the town. I was sentenced to imprisonment for life, and I was put away. I swear before God that I am no murderer, that I did no more than any man under my provocation would have done; but the law of Kansas branded me a murderer and put me away.

"I was in prison for nearly a year, and during that time I was born again. For though I am no murderer my life before my trial had been a shameful waste. I was a clever young man, but I used my talents for wrong purposes. I was a professional gambler—a decoy. I think murderer is the only thing I was not. But during that black year I tried not only to put the past behind me but even to blot it out altogether. I swore that if ever I could escape from that early hell I would do something—I knew not what, but *something*—to leave the world a little better than I found it. There is a moment in every man's life when he will sincerely put himself under the bond of a solemn oath, sell his very life away for a gift from Heaven. That was my moment.

"I escaped, but it was not the waster who went to prison who came out. I reached England, bringing with me my wife, my children and my mother. At first I could do nothing, but I was lucky in business and I began to amass a large fortune, most of which I put aside for my purpose, whenever it should be manifest what form my purpose would take. I wrote a number of books on ethics and conduct, but nobody bought them but the well-conducted. I attempted something with orthodox religion, only to find myself again preaching to the converted. I approached politics, and was sick.

"And then, one day in London, I met Hamilton Harris, whom I had known in Kansas and who knew my story. He recognized me and he treated me like the Christian he is. I told him my plans and my hopes and together we discussed ways and means. I found him most astonishingly sympathetic—even enthusiastic. 'We want,' he said, 'some power to sweep these canting politicians from the face of the earth. Obliterate them if they fail, and they would not fail very often!' And it was then and so that this scheme of ours was born, thirteen years ago. It was a sickly child in those early days. The war came and made us powerless, but it served, too, to steel our resolutions and when it was ended we were keener than ever we had been before. We began to organize in earnest in the autumn of 1920. There was a terrible amount of work to be done before we could make any move. For six whole weeks we did nothing but read books on criminal law, desiring, if it were possible, to refrain in remedying evil from committing wrong ourselves. And then there were disciples to be chosen. This was a task almost beyond human powers, for some of our helpers have so much to give and nothing whatever to gain. Every man who is 'claimed' by the Black Stamp must pass for ever from public life, remember—at least as himself. Long Island can see Hamilton Harris no more. Edgar Springfield can never again be seen on Fleet Street. It was supremely difficult to find the right men—men who were prepared to sacrifice themselves for their ideals and their beliefs. And then we had to let a sufficient time elapse for the 'victims' to become solidly established against their new backgrounds. If they were found to be men who had lived in the places from which they vanished only a week or two, a hoax would be suspected immediately. We had to give them time to get known and respected or hated as the case might be. It took years. It took fourteen months to find a Senator willing to play the part that Maggsley played in Washington. We were weeks in 'sounding' men, and months in deciding whether it would be wise to take them into our confidence. And besides the principals there were 'witnesses' to be enrolled—men who would lie stoutly for the good of the cause, but yet men of known integrity, such as William Baines and the Paris journalist Jules Storme, who engineered the 'disappearance' of M. Lemère for us. Years it took; but we never made one mistake.

"Four years ago I took over Sheppey Court and began to prepare a retreat for our vanished men. We had planned to commence our campaign this year, in the autumn, that fittingly mysterious season, but the coming of Albert Talbot and his death seemed to us to be too good an opportunity to lose. And besides, if we had not buried him as the unknown Roy Way there might have been a public inquiry, and we did not want attention focussing on Thames Town at that moment.

"Our scheme has been called a hoax. It is a hoax. It is the greatest hoax in history. But it is a hoax perpetrated solemnly for a worthy end, and whether we can keep it going for long or for little at least we shall have had some reward. There is hope across the world now, bewildered hope though it is. The statement we published has had the effect we desired. The Processions of Protest are being reorganized as Processions of Praise. The pulpits are timidly acclaiming us. Mankind everywhere is looking to the Black Stamp for justice. How mad and wild it all seems, told here in an English wood. Yet it is true. It is more greatly true than we had ever dared to hope.

"I have told you the whole truth. My children have known the secret of my past since they were eighteen, and it was that disclosure they feared when we found you were amongst us. My son and my daughter have helped me loyally. My wife helped me loyally until she died, three years ago. My mother helps me still. She is known as Mrs. Broderick of Kensington, and in her cheerful house our dream was planned."

Copeland paused and at last looked up at Disher.

"I believe the nearest police station is in Whitstable," he said. "I am not sure that you cannot claim a reward. There was one, seventeen years ago."

And then to his surprise Disher stroked back his hair, smiled and put out his hand.

"You mean—?" Copeland gasped.

"Thomas Charles Cope," said Disher, "shake hands."

"What! Then you knew?"

"What is there I don't know?" said Disher. "I wondered if you would try to hide the truth, and perhaps what the last details of the truth might be. I knew that you were wanted by the Kansas police."

"Their version," said Copeland, "might be different from mine."

"I believe yours."

"I don't see why you should."

"No?" Disher hummed a little snatch of song, stopping suddenly. "The first night I was in Seasalter I told Henry Moon that you did not like me. Nor did you. I never told him that I did not like you. Somehow, I always did. I have forgotten about your past.

The bracken beneath the pines was mysteriously blue and the cars across the heath were hidden in creeping dusk. Without another word the two men rose and walked away from the fallen log. From along the road to Canterbury came the drone of a motor, and by the time they had reached the others a taxi was depositing Mangan and Simms, Cora and Philip Copeland and Mason Snow. As Copeland and Philip were shaking hands Disher looked from father to son and suddenly smiled.

"In charge of your—disappearance in New York, I suppose?"

Copeland nodded.

"Introduce us," said Disher. "We have known each other only informally."

And so they were introduced, to the vast astonishment of Mason Snow, who had to be told twice what had happened. Then Disher looked round to organize the party and found Spotty M'Gee and Cora Gilfin beside a pine tree, watching the rising moon.

"Spotty," he called. "So it's that way, eh?"

"Hu-huh," said Spotty.

"You'll want a wedding present, I suppose?"

"Y'bet!" said Spotty.

"Your expenses have already been arranged," said Disher. "If I give you and Cora five hundred pounds, what happens?"

"Boss," said Spotty, "the very thing me an' Cora's been sayin'. I'll come in with you. I like an honest life. It's so durn excitin'!"

"You'll go straight?"

"Leave 't to me!"

"Can you prove this?"

Spotty screwed up his nimble eyes and rested his nimble hands on his hips. Suddenly from his pocket he drew out a watch. It was an unique thing of gold and precious stones, with a vivid jewel set in the face. He held it out.

"Can I prove 't more than that?" he demanded. And without waiting for an answer he hurried away and assisted Cora into the taxi.

When all were seated the three cars moved off down the curling hill into Whitstable, already beginning to twinkle with the lights of Saturday night. They crossed the little town and rolled over the bridge at Seasalter, pulling up like a procession before the Driftwood Inn. Miles Kale was like a man stricken lifeless at the spectacle of Disher and T. C. Copeland together. He appeared to have the will to run but not the power.

"The genial Kale is one of—us?" Disher asked.

"Decidedly," said Copeland, with a smile.

Indoors, Miles Kale was bidden conjure up the best food that ever the Driftwood Inn had known. And, without outside help, he succeeded. They had no lamps in the dining-room. The great red ball dipping over Sheppey was an unique illumination fitting to the occasion.

There were oblique speeches and open toasts to some enterprise not openly named. Copeland was promised that Dr. Percy should be set free upon the morrow and in return Disher was promised an early meeting with Hamilton Harris, now of Sheppey. And just before the party rose and went out to the veranda to watch the setting sun, an immaculate young man with brilliant black hair dashed into the room.

"I say!" he cried. "Old man Miles has just told me! My hat! This is the most staggering thing that my ears have ever listened to!"

He stood swinging his immaculate cane and staring with unconcealed surprise at T. C. Copeland, to Disher, and back again. His suit was a work of art. His necktie was a tone poem.

"You're really—friends?"

Copeland nodded.

"Topping!" said the immaculate young man, "congrats to you both, and all that tosh! But talk about being knocked down by a feather . . . Gad! I'll not get over it in a year!'

Then Copeland turned to Disher.

"By the way," he said. "I forgot. You've not been introduced to our friend here either—at least formally. Mr. Randolph Peters, sometimes known as Doddy. Mr. Disher."

Disher fixed his monocle and looked into the grinning face of Mr. Randolph Peters.

"Thanks," he said, "for the surprise."

One by one they drifted to the veranda and stood along the rail watching nature emulate the decorations of Mr. Doddy Peters. Suddenly Copeland looked round and said:

"Where is Anna?"

"Where is Henry Moon?" said Disher.

"Eh?"

"That's your answer."

And Disher pointed them out. Anna and Henry above on the road, Cora Gilfin and Spotty M'Gee below on the beach. Copeland noticed only Anna and Henry.

"Ha!" he exclaimed. "She told me she was *willing* to marry him. But—"

"The clever daughter of a clever father," Disher commented, as he watched them walking side by side in the vivid light down the road past the Starlight Bungalow.

Rolling up out of the west came great brown and purple clouds across the lemon-yellow of the sky, unfolding like some gigantic and impossible panorama seen in a gigantic and impossible childhood; a free show. Faster they galloped; leaping from behind the chimney-pots and trees, jumping high and laughing; and as they jumped and as they laughed they changed from brown and purple to black, and the lemon sky behind them deepened to orange, and from orange to red, and through every shade of red to purple; and soon it was too dark for the leaping clouds to be seen before it. Then the lights in the streets and windows popped in one by one, like the house lights of a theater. The panorama was ended and the curtain down. The show was over.

"Yes, I know," Disher drawled as he stood casually swinging his monocle to and fro. "It is the most boresome thing in a'l the world, of course, but I am always right."

The Most Hated Man in Town

[*Continued from page 132*]

S. P. C. A., is commissioned to stop cruelty to animals wherever it comes to his attention.

"And we come across a lot of it," says Conny. "Sometimes we find children playing 'catch' with a kitten or a puppy, tossing it around from stoop to stoop. Often their cruelty is thoughtless, but once in a while they torment an animal intentionally. In such a case we always take it away from them. Grown-ups are frequently guilty, too."

Vensas can mention instances of amazing brutality that have come to his attention. Sometimes he has actually witnessed it and at other times its marks have been visible on animals taken into custody. The S. P. C. A. dog-catchers, charged with the duty of suppressing cruelty in various forms, even call teamsters to account for abusing their horses.

"There isn't much of that in my territory," says Vensas. "I work in upper Manhattan. But every once in a while we find a 'wet-wash' laundry horse being whipped and expected to do unreasonable things. We warn the driver. If he won't stop, we call the police."

Two years in the service have given Conny much to relate. There is humor in a great deal of it, but the humor is generally toned with a bit of pathos, if you look behind the smile.

"There was the time I went after Jazzbo," he recalls. "Jazzbo was a cat. I can't say that I'm as fond of cats as I am of dogs. Not that I dislike them, but I just can't make them out.

"There had been some complaints against this cat, because of viciousness. I went into the apartment and asked the lady where he was. She pointed under the radiator, and said 'Come out, Jazzbo.'

"Well, that was the smartest cat I ever saw. He must have known who I was. As soon as she said, 'Come out,' he came out—like a wild cat. Before I could get him off, that baby had bitten me in the leg about a dozen times. Right from the start I could feel that he disliked me.

"We kept that cat at the pound a good while, but couldn't ever tame him. So he was finally put in the 'tank.'"

At present, all the dog-catchers and helpers wear puttees, as a partial protection against vicious animals. Vensas's hands are full of scars where he has been bitten. The "net," which was once in general use, has been abandoned in New York. For emergencies, each truck carries a "pole-lasso"—a long rod, with a slip noose fastened at the end.

Conny tells of an instance when he had to make use of this contrivance.

"A colored man had abandoned a white bull-dog in a Harlem flat. Nobody could get near him. I had to open the door a couple of inches, and slip the pole through. I waited and fished nearly two hours before the dog was caught.

"The very fact that the dog had been deserted made it an unusual case. Ordinarily a negro doesn't think much more of his white bull-dog than he does of his own right arm. That's the toughest district in town for a dog-catcher. He's in enemy territory all the way."

Although detailed records are kept of each dog captured, the volume of the work carried on is such that an occasional injustice may be done. In Greater New York, lethal gas is administered to an average of one hundred and fifty dogs every day. More than thirty thousand cats were killed in one month.

The poor youngster who cannot afford a license, and whose dog is discovered off the leash, is undoubtedly a frequent victim. The S. P. C. A. believes, however, that its methods avert suffering for the greatest possible number. Automobiles, hunger, the elements, and disease would take a more painful toll than the gas tank.

This, of course, does not console the individual owner, whose pet has been taken up as "strayed" or because of reported viciousness. At each of the four "shelters" and pounds maintained in New York, many a youngster and many a woman has wept over the loss of a four-footed friend. Sometimes a man will rub away a tear, too. Even when the owner voluntarily brings in a hopelessly sick animal to be relieved of its pain forever, unexpected events may occur.

Attendants tell of a woman who asked that her dog be given a humane death. When it was over, she fainted.

"I can understand how those people feel," Conny Vensas muses. "I've always had a dog myself."

At present there are two in the Vensas household. Both are Airedales, chosen because of their dependability around children. They are the special companions of Conny, Jr., not quite two years old. They roll and tumble with him, too husky to be hurt by his baby pranks, and too gentle to injure him in any way.

"Of course we don't live right in the city," Vensas explains. "That's no place for a dog. We're out in Maspeth, Long Island. We have a yard there. It's better than a sidewalk for the baby and a leash for the Airedales. Still, it hasn't always been big enough. We had an Angora cat there, once. . . . I'd be pretty rich if I had a yard large enough to hold an Angora cat and those two dogs."

J. F. GELDERS.

Double Canfield

[*Continued from page 33*]

But for a moment he was unable to articulate.

Margery sprang warmly, if unexpectedly, to her mother's rescue. "You're absolutely right, mother," she declared. "How any decent, self-respecting man could ever lower himself to such an extent is more than I can see. I'm sure that I should want nothing whatever to do with such a person! There!"

Harold mastered control of his vocal cords after a manful struggle. "Perfectly correct, Mrs. Van Kirk-Buchanan!" he choked with obvious sincerity. "I agree with you."

Jerry's eyes sought his plate again. "I beg your pardon," he murmured meekly.

SUNDAY came around in due time. It brought increased heat and the threat of storm from the east. It brought Margery a long afternoon of very annoying golf with Harold, and the evening breeze, southing and fitful, brought her and her little catboat out into the reaches of the Sound.

Jerry lounged with no particular grace half over the gunwale, half in the cockpit. The coat and vest which the formality of Van Kirk-Buchanan days required were neatly rolled into a bundle beside the centerboard and the heliotrope necktie flapped mournfully from the boom. For the first time that day he seemed entirely at his ease, his sleeves rolled up and his soft shirt open at the neck. Margery rather approved of him this way. His forearms were firm and corded, his neck was nicely tanned; there was a litheness to the set of his shoulders. Some way, his features seemed less bland and expressionless, his rumpled hair less annoying. She had discovered this four days before and they had sailed together every evening since. It was Margery's way of "being nice" to Jerry as per father's instructions. Also, it was one way of getting rid of Harold. Ever since she had accidently capsized with that gentleman as passenger, he had showed a marked reluctance to venture upon the water.

"Jerry," she mused at length, "the little boat is going to miss you after tonight. You're the first man who has ever been sailing in her at this time of day."

Jerry was frowning off in the direction of the far shore. "Nice boat," he murmured absently. "But too small to play Canfield on."

"Yes," Margery continued pensively, "I always come out about this time—that is, when I have the chance. But generally I like to be alone. It's so quiet here—it seems so far away from everything. No people around to be nice to because Daddy says I should. I don't like to be nice to people. Most of them are bores. You're a bore, too—but somehow I don't mind you. You seem to fit into the setting."

Musingly she gazed across the placid Sound. The far shore was losing itself in the oncreeping dusk. A gull rose with a raucous cry and circled slowly above them. Behind the boat a tiny gust of wind catspawed the even water. But Margery mused on.

Jerry's voice broke in upon her thoughts. "There's going to be a storm," he said.

Storm sounded too much like home. It jarred on Margery. "What of it?" she demanded.

Jerry shrugged. "Nothing," he said. Silence reigned again.

The breeze from the southeast struck harder. It heeled the tiny catboat upon its tiny beam and brought a momentary surge of cream about its bow. The catspaw which now blotched the Sound seemed angry.

Margery gripped the tiller harder and reached for the sheet. For the first time she became aware of how far from shore they had drifted.

"Why didn't you tell me we were away out in the middle of the ocean?" she demanded.

Jerry glanced leisurely at the shore, the sky, the water and at her. "You didn't ask me."

Margery pulled the tiller over. The bow swung into the wind. A stronger gust than any yet struck with a sudden howl, and the bow swung back again.

"Luff," said Jerry.

"Damn!" said Margery. "Luff nothing!"

They luffed. They tacked uncertainly into the teeth of a swiftly rising gale. The gale continued to rise; the darkness continued to fall; the boat began to rise and fall with lunging jerks. An hour later it was totally dark. They were nearer shore but not much nearer.

"I'm all in," Margery panted. "Have you ever sailed a boat?"

"Sure! Sailed one just like this for the past three summers."

"You did! Why the dickens didn't you tell me so?"

Jerry grinned. "You didn't ask me," he said. "Here, give me the tiller."

They shifted places. A bucketful of the Sound slopped over the side. Rain began to mingle with the spray the wind whipped back.

"Damn!" cried Margery. "I'm going to get all wet!"

"So am I," said Jerry sorrowfully. "It will spoil the press of my trousers."

"Shut up!" retorted Margery. "And reef the sail."

He shook his head. "Wind's too strong. We'd go over sure." The storm swallowed his words. The lights on shore bounced about.

Jerry let the bow fall off. He caught the wind on the starboard beam and hauled in on the sheet. The tiny craft heeled dangerously. Foam hissed along the gunwale, swishing, churning.

Margery leaned closer to make herself heard. "What are you doing?" her gray eyes wide.

"East Point," he shouted back. "Sandy Beach. Run her aground."

"Can you make it from here?"

"Got to. Only chances between here and Connecticut."

Margery crouched on the cockpit deck, clinging to the windward gunwale. Jerry felt her press against his knee. Her eyes were very wide—fear crowded close by exhilaration. Salt drops of spray hung like diamonds from her lashes. A flash of lightning lit her face. For an instant Jerry felt the tiller slip, then turned again to face the storm.

A shadow blacker than the sea leaped at them from the night. There was a sudden jar. The centerboard shot up. The tiny catboat staggered, lurched, then fell upon its side. Margery let go her hold. The Sound rushed up about her ears. She gave a little scream that ended in a gulp.

Water, water, all round—in her eyes, in her nose, in her lungs. After what seemed an age her madly groping arms found something solid and gripped it frantically. Upon closer inspection—when she was able to make closer inspection—the solid something proved to be Jerry's neck. There was something solid about her, too: Jerry's arms. She felt the water drop beneath her as he raised her struggling form.

How strong he was! All fear slipped from her. He was up to his waist in water, holding her just above the waves. She felt the sweetness of being safe after the thrill of the storm. She closed her eyes and sighed.

THERE was an instant's lull in the gale. "Honey," said Jerry softly.

Her eyes came slowly open again. Her lips drew into a tiny, twisted smile. "Funny," she murmured. "I knew some day you'd say it—just like that."

The sea surged up about his waist. "I think," he said, "that I'm in love with you."

A few quick strides took them ashore. He set her on her feet and stood aside to look at her. Bedraggled hair whose golden wave had long since washed away; silken shirt, brine-soaked and soft, that clung in alluring curves. A second lightning flash lit up her face.

"I'm sure," said Jerry softly, "that I'm in love with you."

Margery looked up at him, a rugged blur against the night. His uncombed hair stood straight on end. It didn't look so bad that way, she thought, "I'm quite sure of it, too," she mused aloud. Somehow it seems as though you'd always been. Funny!"

The rain fell, driven by a howling wind. Rising waves reached Soundward from a lee shore.

"It's two years now," he murmured thoughtfully; "since Class Day up at Nicholas. I danced with you. You'd lilac in your hair."

Aloud she wondered. "And you knew it then—two years ago—when you'd only seen me once?"

She felt the steel arms about her again. She tasted salt upon her lips that hadn't been there before. She did not struggle, did not speak, although her lips moved involuntarily.

At last she drew away and looked at him. Her eyes were wide and wondering. "I knew you were going to kiss me then," she said. "I didn't think I'd like it—but I do. Funny!"

"Lilac in your hair," he murmured in her ear. "It's haunting—lilac. Gets into your blood. So I stayed East when school was through."

"You stayed East just for me? . . . I suppose you knew a storm would break—out on East Point—some day?"

"I didn't know—but I had a hunch. . . . Strange things, these hunches."

"Why didn't you let me know you cared. If you'd tried, you could have found a way."

He shrugged. The darkness hid his face. "You didn't ask, dear," he said.

Margery struggled back to earth. She jerked her head to clear away phantasmas from her brain, salt water from her ears.

"Come on," she commanded, leading the way. "We're only about five miles from home. The Sidneys have a place out on this point. We'll borrow their car and drive home."

He followed her quick pace up the beach. The darkness hid his face.

"Jerry," she said.

They were driving home in the Sidneys' car through a wind that howled, a rain that beat.

"What made you say my name like that?" he asked. "The first time you ever said it?"

She did not turn to look at him. "I guess because I feel that way," she murmured. "Salt water in my eyes, my nose. I feel so sort of queer—as though I were drunk. Funny!"

The car lurched on through muddy ruts. The raindrops fogged the windshield. At length she spoke again. "Mother says that you're impossible. Daddy says the same thing. You *are* impossible. I know it for myself. Oh, the whole thing is impossible!"

He nodded seriously! "Of course it is," he said. "That's why we really love each other. Possibilities are so easily satisfied."

"But I never said I loved you."

"You didn't need to, dear."

The road became more smooth but their speed did not increase.

"Oh, it *is* impossible!" she cried. "Utterly impossible! It can't really have happened. Dearest, what are we going to do?"

"I'll get a job," he said. "I'll work like a fool. I'll make good money, wait and see."

She laughed a bit hysterically. "Next week we're going West," she cried. "The Canadian Rockies—Banff and Lake Louise. Dearest, your money wouldn't buy my hats."

He muttered, "I'm not so sure," but her mind was far away.

"I often wish," she mused aloud, "that things weren't as they are. Sometimes I hate this life—it's so darned comfortable! Narrow—Jerry, I've never been in love—or even thought I was—before. I can't imagine why it is that I am now. I suppose because you're so different—so unspoiled. You don't wear silly, fancy clothes; you don't play silly social games that mean a little less than nothing. You just play solitaire all by yourself, and never speak till some one speaks to you. But tonight when the climax came you saved my life. You seem to do a thousand things that others only talk about. And now I love you. Funny—

"But— Oh, it's so impossible. Mother would die! Daddy would disown me! It's impossible! You're impossible! Everybody says so—I know it myself. But, oh, dearest—"

LIGHTS of the big house swung into view, glittering through the rain. The wheels swirled gravel from the drive. They drew up under the porte-cochère.

"Your father wants to see me," Jerry said. "To see Slush and me. When we're through and everybody has gone to bed, I'll flash a light against your window. Then come down."

Her eyes were wide. "Oh, honey, no—"

"And then come down," he repeated. "Tomorrow I go back to town—next week you're going West, you say. Perhaps there'll never be a storm out East Point way again."

"But, Jerry darling, don't you see—"

"When they're all gone," he said, "I'll flash a light. You'll find me on the veranda."

She smiled and her eyes were bright. "I don't know that I'll come," she cried. "But flash your light."

The butler opened the sedan door, and coughed. The butler was most discreet.

At no previous time had any one said anything to Jerry about his host desiring his and Harold's presence on that particular evening. Nevertheless, his prediction came true. Before he had completed a hurried change from one wet suit, unpressed, to another suit—dry but also unpressed—the butler—or perhaps it was the second or third man—rapped on his door and observed that Mr. Van Kirk-Buchanan would be delighted to see Mr. Butler in the library as soon as Mr. Butler would find it convenient.

Van Kirk-Buchanan was pacing the library floor as Jerry entered the room, an expression of incongruous tenseness upon his usually bland features. To one side sat Harold in his most characteristic attitude—talking. Upon Jerry's entrance, however, the host silenced him with an abrupt gesture which seemed strangely out of character.

Motioning Jerry to a seat with an equally abrupt gesture and without so much as a word regarding the near catastrophe of the storm, he clasped his hands behind him in a Napoleonic attitude and strode to the center of the room.

"Gentlemen," he began tersely, "it has been very pleasant to have had your company during the past week. Both Mrs. Van Kirk-Buchanan and I have enjoyed it immensely. Now for a little matter of business, if you will be so kind."

Harold's jaw dropped and an expression of dumb amazement crept over his limp features. Jerry did not raise his eyes. He had picked up a pack of cards from the mantelpiece and was carelessly riffling them.

Harold cleared his throat. "Business?" he murmured incredulously. "Business? I know nothing about it—really."

"I don't doubt it," said Van Kirk-Buchanan drily. Then, with vigor and deliberation. "As you gentlemen probably know, I am more or less active in Wall Street. I play with enterprises, with industries. My present plaything is of no great size and of little real importance, but it had piqued my interest to an unusual extent for the simple reason that to date it has baggled me.

"Gentlemen, I will be frank. I will lay my cards on the table. I seek to control a fairly scattered industry by consolidating several of the leading companies in the field under a single head. It would be the best thing that could happen to the industry if this were to come through, as well as being profitable to me. Four of the five companies are all ready to line up, but the fifth—the most solidly established and well organized of them all—is holding out. A large block of the voting stock is held by a small clique of people in the town where the factory is located. This clique will neither sell out nor vote their stock in favor of the consolidation. Of course, I can make a fight of it and win in the end, but that would be expensive."

He paused and weighed his words carefully. "I said that I would lay my cards upon the table," he said slowly. "I shall do so now. Gentlemen, between you two you hold the controlling balance of that stock. The fate of that company is in your hands."

Harold licked dry lips almost fearfully. "You—you don't mean—" he stammered.

"The Eureka Fertilizer Company? Exactly!"

There was an instant of silence. Jerry shuffled his cards methodically. "What is your proposition, Mr. Buchanan?" he asked.

"Simply this: I shall be glad to buy the stock which you two hold at two points above yesterday's closing price."

"That's pretty low," said Jerry. Harold remained aghast.

"Yes, it is low," said their host with what seemed like a chuckle. "I beat it down myself."

"But—but was that a nice thing to do?" ventured Harold, finding his voice with an effort.

Van Kirk-Buchanan laughed. It was not a pleasant laugh, and Harold seemed to shrivel up.

Jerry dealt three cards face down upon the table and on them three others, face up. "I don't think," he said at length, "that I care to sell right now—at any price."

Van Kirk-Buchanan whirled on him and his eyes grew narrow and hard. "Don't try the hold-up game on *me*, young man!" he snapped. "Two points or not one cent! I shouldn't try to fight, if I were you. I'd crush you both and all your friends."

JERRY waved a deprecating hand. "That would be expensive," he declared. "You admit that much yourself. I do not care to sell right now, but I should be glad to vote my stock your way—under certain conditions."

Van Kirk-Buckanan's eyes narrowed speculatively. "I am open to reason," he declared. "And what are those conditions?"

Jerry pondered deeply. "Well," he announced finally; "I think that I should like to be a voting trustee of the new concern."

Van Kirk-Buchanan started. His red face grew even redder. He began to sputter and wheeze.

"And," continued Jerry, unperturbed. "I should like to be appointed an officer of the company—say, sales manager or promotion manager. Of course, I'd be just a figurehead until I had learned all about the business, so I would be willing to start on a salary as low as fifteen thousand a year."

After a heroic struggle Van Kirk-Buchanan obtained partial control of his voice. "You—you young upstart!" he roared. "I'll see you damned forever! You may think that a joke but that's not my idea! I'm through with you!"

He whirled on Harold. "Name your price, Hawkes!" he ordered sharply. "I'll pay you par for all the stock you hold. Spot cash for every share! You own three times as much as he, anyway. I can swing the deal without him! Come! What do you say?"

Harold cleared his throat furiously. He coughed and hiccoughed several times. "Mr. Van Kirk-Buchanan!" he blurted out at last. "Oh, Mr. Van Kirk-Buchanan! I—the fertilizer business is so— Why, none of the really good families would lower themselves to enter it. You can't be serious, Mr. Van Kirk-Buchanan!"

His host smile drily. "The better the stock, the better the families that hold it," he observed. "Cash for your shares, sir."

Harold bowed his head. "I couldn't stand the thought of being plebeian," he said. "I—I sold it. Every share."

Jerry was dealing himself a hand of Canfield. "That's true," he murmured without raising his eyes. "He sold it—every share—this past week. And as fast as he sold it, I had my broker buy it up. Mother had to sell the old hotel and all her other holdings—but we got it all. Thanks to you, Mr. Buchanan, the price was low."

For several seconds no one spoke. Finally, "I like a man who'll take a chance," Van Kirk-Buchanan said. "But what a chance! Or did you know what was in the wind?"

Jerry smiled. "I didn't know," he said. "But I had a hunch. Strange things, hunches!"

"I think," his host declared with a sudden hearty smile, "that you and I can work this thing out very well together. I like your attitude, young man. Good night, Mr. Hawkes."

They "worked it out" until one-thirty A.M. Promptly at two a light flashed on Margery's window. Two minutes later she was in Jerry's arms in the front vestibule, fully dressed and with a suitcase in her hand.

"Dearest!" she whispered. "I'm so scared! I don't know what I'm doing! But I don't care! Take me away from here with you!"

"Think awfully hard, honey," Jerry begged. "Think of all that it may mean."

"I have!" she cried. "I've thought and thought—while you were down here with father. I'll give up Banff and my hats and everything! I don't care if you're as poor as Job! I love you and that's all that matters now!"

Jerry kissed her. "All right," he said.

Her roadster scuttled down the drive and swung out on the wide turnpike. Headlights flashed on the wet road. The rain had ceased to fall.

"We're mad!" cried Margery, looking back. "The family will die. You're impossible, dearest—perfectly lovably impossible! And we're going to be poor as a couple of mice. Poor mother! Poor dad! Poor us!"

Jerry slowed the car to a more conversational speed. "Let's go to Banff, after all," he suggested. "I think it would be a fine place for a honeymoon from all I've heard."

Her eyes flew open wide. "Jerry! What do you mean?"

"I'm not poor any more," he told her. "I've just been appointed third vice-president of the Eureka-Buchanan Fertilizer Company. I'm a rising young magnate, honey."

Her eyes grew thoughtful. "Fertilizer," she mused. "I thought there was something in the wind. Remember what I said the other day. Daddy let slip just a hint, and Harold— But why didn't you tell me what was up?"

The big omtor hummed evenly, powerfully. A moth flew into the headlight's beam. "You didn't ask me, dear," said Jerry blandly.

Out-Guessing Wild Animals that Think

[*Continued from page 68*]

technical expert, but as a hunter. Four years he worked in the wildest sections of Arizona, in the ranks of the grim, sun-bronzed, uncommunicative men that dog the steps of animal outlaws. Here the war they waged against predatory beasts gave him a liberal education in the animals' tricky ways.

Rapid advancement followed until now he directs a staff of twenty to thirty hunters, not to mention his assistants in office and field. But being the general of this little army does not make him a swivel-chair man. He may be in conference with the state Governor one morning but the next night is likely to find him making camp, high in the mountains, with some illiterate Mexican sheep herder who has suffered from the depredations of some sheep-killer. There is no romancing about Mr. Young's animal stories. They are the strange facts of actuality secured while tracking animals in the wildest sections of the West.

SITTING in his dimly-lighted, high-ceilinged office in the Customs Building at Denver, it needed but a question to start him discussing the grim game of running down quadruped cattle thieves, dead or alive.

"Do animals think?" said Mr. Young, repeating the question. He leaned back in his office chair. His tanned face wrinkled in a slight frown. He bowed his head in thought.

Then his head snapped erect. His blue eyes regarded me steadily. His answer was emphatic, his words clipped decisively.

"Don't think there is any question about it!"

"Psychologists say—" I started to suggest.

Young interrupted.

"Yes, I know. Laboratory conditions. Range conditions are different. I'll not say just what degree of reasoning animals reach. But if you can explain their actions in any other way than that they think, I wish you'd do it.

"I guess I'll qualify that a bit more. I'm not speaking about the usual run of animals, the ordinary, job-lot of petty thieves that steal a few chickens now and then. The ones we have our hardest times with are mostly bad hombres. They're renegades. And in dodging danger they do some stunts that are just about human.

"Why, take the case of the Custer wolf, up in the Black Hills. You've heard about him?"

I nodded, for the Custer wolf is about the most notorious outlaw ever caught in the dragnet of the Biological Survey.

"That old cuss was about as cunning as they make them. He was darned near human, I'm telling you. He'd been shot at and trapped at and poisoned at for years. Finally the Survey sent hunter Williams of the Wyoming District up there. He's as keen on this wolf business as any of our men, and we've got some good ones. He's learned how a wolf thinks; knows what a wolf will do under a certain set of conditions. Then he out-guesses the wolf.

"People in that section had trapped out or killed practically every other wolf within miles. The Custer wolf had not had any mate for years. So Williams took in the scent of a she wolf from another range. Man, that Custer wolf started cutting circles. He thought he had found a new mate. Williams would put this scent on his moccasins and the old Custer wolf would trail him looking for the strange she wolf. The Custer wolf went back to the den that he and his last mate had inhabited, dug it all out and got it all ready for housing his new mate and a bunch of whelps. Yes sir, he was all ready to set her up in housekeeping when he found her.

"Williams came near getting him early in the game, just a few days after he got on the job. A wolf kills and gorges himself on the fresh meat until he is happy drunk with the warm blood and flesh. Then he crawls off into the brush a couple of hundred yards away to sleep off the meat jag.

"This Custer wolf made a kill which Williams found one morning. The steer carcass was barely cold. Our hunter started tracking the wolf, knowing that he would be up on some hillside sleeping in the sun. A couple of cowpunchers came riding out of a side cañon and started to yell to Williams. They aroused the wolf and he beat it before Williams got to him. He was there all right. Williams had it figured out but didn't get him that time.

"It was days before he saw him again. This occurred in early spring. It took Williams until October to out-guess that wolf. There was no wilder celebration in Custer when the war was over than there was the night Williams showed the scalp of the Custer wolf.

"I guess they had a right to be happy though. That wolf cost the section somewhere in the neighborhood of twenty-five thousand dollars before they got him."

"How was that?"

"Stock he killed."

"Isn't that a pretty high figure?" I ventured.

"Yes," replied Young. "But there are two or three others that came near equaling it. That is the reason we are in this game. To support wild killers like these is just too much of a tax on the cattle industry in the West. It has been estimated that— Here you don't need to take my word for it. Look at this pamphlet." He handed over a reprint from a recent Yearbook of the Department of Agriculture.

Some figures caught my eye. This report solemnly stated that from twenty million dollars to thirty million dollars each year were lost to stock raisers through predatory animals. A little farther on were other surprising figures. In Texas two wolves had killed seventy-two sheep, valued at nine dollars each, during a period of two weeks. A New Mexico killer, a wolf, had slaughtered twenty-five head of cattle in two months; another had destroyed a hundred and fifty cattle, valued at not less than five thousand dollars, during the six months preceding the time when the Survey hunters put an end to his crime career. A Texas bobcat had killed over three hundred dollars' worth of Angora goats. The President of the New Mexico State Agricultural College, after a personal investigation, was quoted as saying that predatory animals had caused a loss of sixteen million pounds of meat and about one million three hundred and twenty pounds of wool in that one State annually, the total valuation of this loss being about $2,715,250.00.

"Why, these outlaws are worse than the old-time cattle thief that had two legs," I exclaimed.

Young nodded.

"You bet they are worse. There are more of them. And what is more, they have cunning that exceeds that shown by some men. Call it thinking, if you will. Let me tell you about Three Toes, the famous she-wolf that we finally got down here near Thatcher, Colorado."

"Just a minute, before you tell that story—how many predatory animals do you manage to bag each year?"

"Can't tell offhand. Sometimes we are called into a district to make a quick clean-up. We utilize our poison system and get hundreds of coyotes. Our estimate of results is based on what the sheepmen tell us about the dead carcasses found after we get through. The only accurate count we have are skins and scalps we take.

"I can tell you one figure without consulting statistics. Since we started in 1917, we've taken eleven thousand coyotes out of the San Luis Valley—just one section. That means something to the sheepmen of that district."

"Are all these the renegade type of cattle-killer?"

"No. No, they're not. But all predatory animals, whether renegade or ordinary breeds, get lots of stock in the way of young lambs and calves."

"What are the worst, the craftiest animals you hunt?"

"The worst individual killers are the gray wolves. They do more damage per capita than any other kind of predatory animal we kill. They are the most cunning too. You asked if animals think. Let me tell you how we have to go out after wolves.

"A wolf has a regular run. It is a circle often about fifty miles in circumference. He makes the rounds regularly. We study a killer wolf's habits sometimes for months. Then we make a trap set for him on this run at some key point. Can't poison a wolf. He's too wise.

"In setting traps for wolves we make two kinds of sets. Wolves have scent posts just like domestic dogs. We find the ground all scratched up around these. Sometimes we set traps at such points. To stir up the local wolf, get him all excited so he'll lose his head a bit, we often bring in the scent of some foreign wolf we have trapped. That makes the local wolf mad to find an invader in his bailiwick. He starts rarin' around and gets into a trap.

"Some of them are so cunning they will not get into a trap at a scent post. They just sense there is something wrong and dodge the trap. Then we make what is called a blind set.

"In making a blind set, the hunter waits until it is about time for the wolf to come by a point on his circle trail. These men get this figured out almost to the hour because they may have been studying that particular wolf for weeks. Then they select a place where the trail is narrow. They dig a pit and put the set trap in it. They handle the traps with gloves and keep all of the dirt they dig on what is called a setting cloth. Everything in the way of footgear, setting cloth, trap and gloves, has had the scent of man taken from it."

"How do you do that?"

"QUICKEST, best way is to bury this plunder in an old manure pile for about three days. The hunter must be careful not to let any of the fresh earth lie around. He bundles this up in the setting cloth and carries it away. A wolf would notice fresh earth pronto and would get out of the trail right now. Finally the trap is covered lightly with litter and leaves. Art of a successful trap set is to put it in the right location and to leave the ground appearing as natural as before that trap was set.

"When covering a set, some hunters place twigs and leaves in such a way that often the wolf will step right into the pan of the trap. They've done it time after time. Know the wolf way of thinking and acting to the minutest detail and then out-smart him.

"Let a wise old wolf be coming around his regular run after being away, oh, maybe three weeks or a month, and if he finds the hoof print of a shod horse in the trail, he gets right out of that trail. Or even the imprint of a man's shoe will make him desert the trail. Our men have to wash their feet to remove man scent, put on clean wool socks and wear moccasins with all man scent removed. That's the kind of tactics you have to follow to get these old renegades. You can call it thinking or not as you please, but you ask some of the boys that have out-guessed these fellows and you'll admit if a wolf doesn't think, he comes mighty close to it.

"That brings me back again to Three Toes, the she-wolf. We don't know, but we think Old Whitey was her mate." Young swung in his chair and pointed to the mount of a great, rangy, powerful wolf that stood on the top of a cabinet at the other side of the office. "That's Whitey there. We got him by bringing in and scattering around the scent of a foreign wolf. Went wild, Whitey did. We could track where he had been running wild over Bear Mesa looking for that other wolf. He was caught on a trap set near a scent post that had been spotted with the strange scent. You could just picture out how Whitey had torn up the earth looking for that other wolf. Question of leadership you see. He was looking for that other fellow to lick him.

"After we got Whitey we thought we had the pack. But we didn't get Three Toes. We came to know her by the missing three toes on the left hind foot. Could track her anywhere. The Biological Survey had trapped thirty-two wolves out of that section since they started operations there and we figured we had them whipped.

"Then Three Toes came to life.

"Wait a minute, I'll show you her skull."

YOUNG went to a cabinet where there are the whitened skulls of many killers that have fallen before the persistent trailing of his men. He picked up a skull and brought it forward moving the great jaw on its bone hinge.

"Just look at that jaw spread," he cried. "Just see the purchase that old she-devil had. Go right through bone she would with those teeth. I saw where she and her pack had gone through a herd of cattle and had actually bitten right through the tails of steers at the rump end. Snipped clean."

A man with a heavy meat ax has to strike a hard blow to cut a steer tail off the carcass.

"A man wouldn't have much of a chance with a gang like that would he?" I ventured.

"I should say not. Why, they'd hit him just once if they took a notion to, and it would be all up with him."

"How do they attack a steer?" I asked, for the moment forgetting about the story of Three Toes in my wonderment at the powerful brutes that could throw a cow-critter dead in three steer-jumps.

"Hit him first on the ham-string, the tendon of Achilles. Cut through that tendon on the back of his leg like it was twine. Then they hit him in the throat. But the real blow that stops the steer is made by that quick, diving, slashing cut of the ham-string. Then it's all up with Mr. Steer.

"But I was telling you about Three Toes. She had been running alone not making many kills or perhaps she temporarily had been driven out of that section. She was without a mate after we had cleaned up on Whitey and his gang. Mating time came.

"You can believe it or not, just as you wish. I can give proof. Got signed statements over the whole case. The old vixen started snooping around the Monroe Brothers and Henderson ranch near Thatcher. She was out to mate with a collie dog they owned at the ranch.

"Hunter Roy Spangler had been put on the job just for the purpose of getting Three Toes. He got on the job in early spring. In December, which is wolf-mating time, he wrote me that Three Toes was coming down to that ranch, sitting on a little hill just back of the corral and howling for the dog to come out to her. The dog was a grade collie and everyone at the ranch liked him. But he sure heard the call of the wild. At first he went away from the ranch only a night at a time. Then he would be gone for several nights. Three Toes would come and call him back to running with her every time he returned to civilization.

"Finally the people at the ranch cooped up the collie dog. Had him in an old chicken run. That night Three Toes came down and helped him dig out. They never got close to that collie again until he ran into a poison line some weeks later.

"But they had mated before Spangler poisoned the collie. In March, 1923, Spangler reported to me that she had whelped in a den near his ranch but that the whelps had got away. You can block a wolf from getting into a den, if you discover it while the parent wolf is away, by putting up a handkerchief on a stick or any other object to scare them. We call this flagging the den. This den was discovered, but the rancher who found it did not savvy wolf lore. He went to get a spade to dig out the whelps without putting up anything to scare Three Toes. By the time he got back, she had the whelps all out and away. They never did hole up again.

"In June that year, she and her whelps killed nine calves belonging to one ranch.

"One day Spangler, who was giving his whole time to hunting Three Toes, found her track in the trail. He followed on horseback. Coming up on soft earth he rode right up onto Three Toes's family. The five whelps and the mother were playing along the trail like a bunch of pups and a mother dog. Spangler tried to get his 25.35 into action but Three Toes had the start. By the time he was ready to shoot, she had dodged back of some sage and then made it to the top of a little butte. There she turned, just out of rifle shot, and sat and howled. Cussed him. Dared him to come on and see if he could get her. She sat there and bellowed at him until she was sure every one of those cubs were safe and then she beat it.

"Now don't tell me that she-wolf didn't do some thinking and mighty quick, too. She had it all figured out."

Young looked down at the powerful jaws of Three Toes, killer, mate of Old Whitey and of the collie dog.

"She sure was a notorious murderer, that wolf. Spangler was on her trail from spring until June 11, 1923. Caught her on a blind set. He just had it figured out when she would come back that way and where she would step when she hit that piece of trail. Patience, gosh, it takes patience, and you've got to out-guess the wolf every time."

"What about the whelps, the half collie, half wolf dogs?" I asked.

"One's alive yet," said Young. "Veterinary down at Trinidad has her. She's very timid, scares at the least thing. All of the traits of the collie and the wolf mother combined into the most timid brute I've ever seen.

"Rest of them we killed. I had one of them here in Denver for a while. Caught him in a trap. But couldn't do a thing with him. Snapped and snarled every time I went anywhere near him. Killed him because I was afraid he would get away. Suppose this other one will be killed some day, too. They're the offspring of killers and will never be domesticated."

"You don't confine your work to wolves alone, of course?"

"No indeed. Bobcats, lions, grizzlies that have gone bad; anything which preys on stock."

"How about the mountain lions? You've had a chance to observe their actions. Anything to this story about their sitting up in a tree and waiting for a victim to come along the trail below?"

Young shook his head.

"No, there are only a few authentic reports of lions attacking people. Several years or so ago a lion up on Vancouver Island stalked a young lad and would have killed him but his sister got the hired man there in time with a gun to shoot the lion. Then they found that the lion was practically blind. Chances are that he would not have tackled the boy if he had not been frenzied by lack of food.

"The other attack occurred in Washington last fall. I sent out to Dr. Glen Bach of the Washington District and got a report of that. It was pretty ghastly. Lion stalked a boy in a swamp. You could see just where he had crouched, how he had sneaked up on the lad, how he had made the spring, disemboweled the boy, and all. Even had parts of the boy's body up in a tree and had come back to feed on him a couple of times. It was pretty awful. Those are two positively authentic cases on record of a mountain lion attacking a person but practically all of those animals are timid when man is around. They prey on livestock. The wolf is the worst killer of the bunch. He never eats from a carcass that is cold unless he is driven to it. One of the worst killers we have ever taken evaded the efforts of the Survey and other hunters for years. This was the Spring Valley wolf over in Arizona."

"From all you say, this game of tracking down four-legged killers is no easy Government job."

"No, sir. It's not. Not every man can qualify as a hunter. Practically every man we have on the hunting force is an old-timer. They are men who have the pioneer blood in them and simply cannot be content to live in a city or even in a small town. They just can't keep away from this work. Sometimes they quit, but in a year or so they're back. They've got to have a job which is real frontier and this is about the nearest they can get to it these days. They're really about the last of the old frontiersmen."

"You said that you had trapped out thirty-two wolves from the Bear Spring Mesa Country before you got Three Toes. There can't be many left in the State."

"Not many. There are a few along the New Mexico border and another pack is running down toward the Natural Bridges in Utah. But we're getting cooperation between our men on the Colorado side of the line and the Survey hunters in the other States and some of these days we'll get those beggars. You watch and see. We'll clean up on them."

It was a few weeks later that I saw Stanley Young in the Public Market loading his hands with green vegetables. It was a pretty good sign he had come in from a field trip. Always there are canned goods and baking-powder biscuits on a field trip, but few fresh vegetables. When one returns to town, craving for green garden truck and fresh fruits must be satisfied. He was in field clothes as though he had just got back in town. I hailed him. He turned to me with a grin spreading over his tanned features.

"Say," he cried, all enthusiasm. "We got an old-timer the other day. Over near the Utah border. One of the wolf pack I told you about. Not been on this side of the line before in six months, but our man was watching for him and we nabbed him. His mate is free and she's whelping in that wild country west of Disappointment Valley. But we'll find her!"

The way of the transgressor is hard! What chance has a four-legged stock thief when a Biological Survey hunter has that much enthusiasm and persistence in getting him "dead or alive?"

Skag

[*Continued from page 67*]

Skag knew that there could be little difference.

Then came the morning when Skag was fairly aburst with joy. The three sledges—long, tough affairs, their joints painted over with shellac—were brought out of the store-house and pushed into place side by side a few feet apart. Immediately the sergeant and the five others of the detachment, together with the native interpreters, hunters, and guides set-to on the loading.

Skag's old heart throbbed with joyful anticipation. All his misgivings left him. Of late he had pondered more and more the puzzle of his status, the new and strange treatment he was receiving, the lack of regard the men showed him and which he had never before experienced, but now, with the work under way and the prospect of leading a team looming big, his fears left him like a bad dream before the onslaughts of the morning sun.

The work was done with precision and despatch. The heavy cans of ship biscuit came first, then the pemmican. On top of this solid floor were piled the smaller tins, ammunition, sundry apparel and blankets. Over all went the tarpaulins and last, the tough Maguey ropes, imported by the sergeant who had served on the plains and knew their toughness.

"All set, my lucky lads," the sergeant cried at last, giving his thigh a slap. "Now to get these bloody tripe-hounds into the harness."

Skag ran about crazily, wondering which team was to be his to lead and bursting with the desire to feel the webbed band across his chest and to force himself against it.

"Hey, there," the sergeant called, "what's getting into that pet slouch? Look at him, will you, marching around like a two-year-old. Lay down you crazy old duffer before I knock y'r block off." The sergeant made a light pass at Skag with his snake-whip, and the others laughed at the prospect of the sluggard from Dawson wanting to pull.

Skag lay down quickly; more astonished than alarmed. Never before had he been struck at with a whip. The incident served to cool a measure of his ardor; but he continued, nevertheless, to glance about anxiously for a clue that would show him his team. What did it matter, after all, if the men liked him or not as long as he was permitted to pull—and to lead.

At last the men began rounding up the dogs. The sergeant stood aside and gave orders for the distribution, placing the dogs so that a reasonable balance of weight and strength be maintained throughout, for the success of the patrol demanded that the sledges have equal bearing and stress, and the same traction and speed. One after another the dogs were allotted to the three sets of policemen and natives.

Then, after a certain dog had been appointed to the sergeant's own team, the man called "Bax" made a remark.

"What's that, Bax?" the sergeant demanded. "Putting all the beef into my own team, am I? Well, let me tell you something, if you think you can balance up three teams with a mixed bunch like this and do it better than me, why hop to it." The sergeant glowered a moment, then added. "But just to show you how I feel about it, I'm going to take the dead-weight from Dawson. If that isn't playing fair with you, I want to know what is."

Skag caught the meaning of this, although he wasn't listening; too intent was he on the distribution of the dogs. Already the natives had harnessed the lead dogs of two of the teams and were trying in others behind them. That meant, Skag decided, that he was to lead the sergeant's team, the only one that was still without a lead.

AFTER making the announcement of his intention to Bax, the sergeant roughly took hold of a large dog who stood near and pulled him into the lead harness. Skag bounded forward. A mistake had been made. Crowding up to the other dog, he was greeted by the sergeant's clenched fist square on the point of his nose and thrown into a sprawling heap.

"Get out of it, will ye?" the sergeant shouted, still heated from the tilt with Bax. "Bad enough I've got to take you along without y' fooling around. You'll get work soon enough. Think I'll put you back at wheel, that'll work the steam out of your system."

The blow had all but stunned him, but through the pain of it, the single thought hammered through Skag's brain. "He wasn't going to lead! He wasn't going to lead." He just lay there staring blankly and confusedly at the sergeant, at the dogs, and at the bystanders, bewildered at the catastrophe that had befallen him. Why? What had he done? What misdeed of his had brought this terrible punishment? His great frame commenced to tremble and a low, quivering whimper rose in his throat; he was not going to lead. He wasn't going to lead.

"Come here, now," the sergeant snapped. Skag continued to stare blankly his great heart pounding with hurt. The order was never repeated. Leaping across the traces the sergeant caught him by the mane, dragged him roughly to the traces and threw him against the prow of the sledge and yanked the harness over him. The man was panting with temper.

"Damned if I know who I'd rather kill—you or that bloody recruit, Bax." Then rising to his feet, he stamped over to the door of the main building where the men were donning their caribou parkas and mittens. "Take those bloody things off till you get a sweat up. Got enough worry without nursing a bunch of Southlanders. Go on, get started—I'll bring up the rear."

The two leading sledges moved off silently, a a man at the gee pole, another in front of the dogs, and the remainder trotting easily along on the sides in the pace known as the "mush."

Skag lay prone and still in the traces, his eyes closed fast on the snow glare, his shaggy old head pillowed between two big paws, and his heart a swollen weight within him. In front of him were the five other dogs, lying or squatting on the snow, actively intent on all that passed. But Skag saw nothing; the five dogs, the natives who stood about or the sergeant who had come out of the house with an Esquimeau.

The sergeant it was who had put him back at the end of the team, who had crushed his one great, burning ambition, who had crushed him; but, strangely enough, Skag felt no resentment against the man. All he knew was that a dull emptiness had taken hold of his insides and that he wished to be dead, for he knew he had not the power to repair the great mistake that had been made.

"Now get me straight, Klaku, my lad," the sergeant was saying. "You start out with an empty sled as soon as the dispatches get here. You'll be able to catch up 'cause I've got a devil of a load on and the going will be slow. I'd stick here myself, only I want to keep in distance of those others. Got that now?" The Esquimeau nodded that he had.

The sergeant walked up to the sledge, thrust his weight against one side, then the other, and broke it clear of the crust.

"All right, now," he cried warningly, "mhoosh."

All through the morning Skag pulled hard. Down along the coast they went, up over knolls and hummocks of ice, into the valleys and across flats. The work was easing the pain of anguish that had torn within him. It was good to be back in the traces, but he closed his eyes to shut out the sight of the five other dogs running out ahead. When he saw them the hurt returned; he must keep his eyes closed.

For which reason Skag did not see the tiny crevasse toward which they headed. He tripped, fell, and brought the traces into a tangle. The snake-whip flashed and landed with a sickening sound on Skag's back. The blow tore a scream from him.

"That'll teach you to watch where you're going," the sergeant shouted. "If five of 'em can miss it, so can you."

Another two hours of steady running and the sergeant called a halt, cut the dogs out of the traces, untied a corner of the sledge cover to get at the dried fish. The dogs gathered about in a whining milling group, pushing into each other in an effort to be first—all but Skag. While the others twisted and pranced about, he dragged himself off to the shelter of a large stone past which the drifts had blown leaving a rounded cove. There was an empty feeling in his stomach, but Skag knew that it wasn't caused by hunger. He didn't want food, all he wanted was to be left alone in his misery.

"Going to have a fit of the sulks, are you?" the sergeant called out with a sneer. "Well, when you get good and hungry, maybe I'll have a fit of 'em meself." With which remark he proceeded to ration out the frozen fish which disappeared down the five throats as if but an appetizer.

When the sergeant himself had made a frugal and hasty meal, the dogs were once more rounded into position. Skag had thought to stand up near the lead to see if that would help in retrieving his rightful position, but his better judgment prevailed; there would be no moving a harsh master like the sergeant. Trotting quietly over to his place in front of the sledge, he stood meekly while the sergeant harnessed up.

UNDER way once more, the sledge ran smoothly for a few miles and then the going became rough. The tracks of the other two sledges showed that they had suffered an upset and more than one lengthy detour. The sergeant had all he could do to manage the heavy sledge in his single-handed condition. But the sergeant was a tough and hardened man—and an arrogant one. All the hardships of the Arctic combined could not for a moment nettle him. The ground must be covered, and the ground would be covered, if it took the last ounce of strength in himself and in the dogs. Such at least seemed his outlook as he whipped and harried the toiling dogs over the rugged ice.

Skag plodded along, noting now and then how bad a path the lead dog was choosing, a faint professional anger stirring within him at such times. Surely the lead must be a mongrel or an overgrown pup.

Then a change came. Suddenly and without warning, the sky grew dull and slate colored and sullen and a great flurry of snow began to fall. The team and sledge blundered on amid this added difficulty to the going. The sergeant swore. Skag sniffed and shook his head to keep the falling flakes out of his eyes. The whole team was in the same difficulty. The headway slackened. The going became worse —as did the sergeant's temper.

Contrary to the warnings of his judgment and experience, the sergeant did not halt and pitch camp, but kept doggedly on bucking the storm. Several times Skag looked back as if to ask were it not foolhardy to risk the chance of becoming lost or going down through the ice.

Four long, trying hours the sergeant forced the team into the teeth of the blizzard, swearing, blinding and whipping.

Then at last he had to quit. Nothing human could ride the storm and survive. Halting the team and cutting out the dogs to let them shift for themselves, he quickly unloosed the sledge ropes, tucked them carefully underneath the load, and pulled the tarpaulin clear and out over the leeward side of the sledge. Then, rigging up a make-shift lean-to and throwing under it his deer-skin sleeping-bag, the sergeant crawled from sight to make a night of it while the blizzard spent its force.

Skag dug himself under a drift and was soon buried by the soft, falling snow. It was a relief to get away from the sergeant and the sledge and especially from those other dogs. The sight of them, always up there in front of him, was becoming sickening, was stirring something low within him that hadn't been there before. And, too, another feeling was taking hold of him. He had not eaten since early morning and then he had been too eager to get away in the harness and had left half his meal which another dog had promptly gulped. Since that time they had pulled hard and far, and although the others were losing the evening meal the same as he, Skag was less fitted to bear the omission. It was all cruel. He had endured more adversity in the last twelve hours than any other dog would in a lifetime. With a little whimper of resignation he curled up and tried to forget—though he could not help dreaming.

It was early dawn and bitter cold when the loaded handle of the sergeant's snakewhip broke in on Skag's dugout. Skag sprung out to find the rest of the team waiting to be harnessed.

"Too blamed lazy to get up for breakfast," the sergeant declared as he fastened the traces over Skag's shoulders. "Beats me," he added with a shrug. "Well, boy, if you can get on without eating, all the better for the rations."

Skag's condition from lack of food had kept him asleep while the others had been fed, but now he was nearly ravenous with hunger, but he had no way of explaining that to the sergeant. So, when the whip was snapped and the word given, Skag leaned to the traces with the rest, though his legs were not gripping as they should.

More of the rough going of the previous day commenced, only now it was worse. On the day before they had had to contend with ridges and hummocks of ice and snow-covered rock, but now they were unable even to see those obstacles before the sledge, plowing through the soft, powdery snow, collided with them. Twice in the first hour's travel the sledge upset, and once, when the team sledge and all ran into a jam, all of the sergeant's strength was required to extricate the sledge and Skag's hind leg from between the two sharp hummocks.

The team and its driver managed to endure an hour of this torturous going and then the sergeant threw up the attempt with a curse on the Arctic and all it stood for. Leaving the team where it stood, he made his way to an eminence that lay off to the right of their tracks and which marked the end of the mainland.

Scrambling picking a way, slipping and sliding, he managed to reach the top. Here he stood for several moments scanning the gray white world of the Polar ocean. Then he seemed to find that for which he searched. With a haste that should have proved his undoing, he slid and half fell down from the rise and hurried back to the waiting team.

It was an effort for Skag to pull himself up, for besides the famished condition that was slowly sapping him, the hind leg which had suffered the injury was now beginning to stiffen and ache.

"All aboard, my lads," the sergeant cried, grasping the handles of the sledge. "Out onto the bay for ours and we'll catch up quicker. Mhoosh, now."

Skag limped along as best he could. Fortunately the going was so bad that they could not move rapidly, and he managed to keep up with the pace without being whipped, though an occasional curse rang into his ears from behind.

A half mile through unusually pinnacled sea-ice and the team emerged on a flat, sheer sweep of level ground. The sergeant uttered a shout of joy.

"How's that look to you? Flat as a pancake, by God!"

OUT over the smooth expanse they went. Then Skag reached down his muzzle and sniffed, then slowed in his pace. Holding his quivering nose close to the snow as he ran, he plowed it through the soft whiteness, his ears moving quickly all the while. Suddenly he pulled up short, so suddenly that a jerk was carried through the traces and up to the lead-dog. The lead, thinking that he had missed a cue to stop, halted dead in his tracks.

The sergeant had seen the cause of the sudden delay. Uncoiling the whip he descended upon Skag in a fury of anger.

"You bloody trouble-making son of a wolf-whelp," he cried, lashing brutally down on Skag's shoulders and back. "Mhoosh, blast you. Mhoosh before I cut you to ribbons." Skag cringed under the lashing and crept a few feet farther on. Once more he halted and sniffed into the snow. The tiny black holes where the dog in front had stepped were blackening.

The sergeant struck a last frightful blow.

Then in a crowning burst of temper he threw away the whip and dashed up ahead to drag-lead the team himself.

A low whoom. A piercing crack. A deep, muffled splash. The sergeant was gone from sight, a hand desperately gripping the lead harness to show where he had gone through.

Skag understood. Digging in his four feet and bracing his back as he had done that winter on the Delly, he hung tight, forcing himself deep into the heavy slush and crust ice to where his feet struck firm. The other dogs were slipping and sliding about in abject terror, making no effort to save themselves. None were trying to grip; Skag was holding them. He tried to back up; the weight was too much. The sergeant's dripping head appeared. He made to leap up. The ice again broke under him and he fell back, dragging the lead-dog in with him. The strain was becoming overwhelming. The harness was cutting into his flesh like so many bands of hot strap-iron.

Then the qualities and breeding that had made Skag a lead-dog shone. His hind leg was useless, but he held on with the expressionless determination of a thoroughbred. The sergeant tried again, now panting heavily with banging teeth. The dog in the water was churning and fighting and making it worse for the sergeant. The second dog fell in.

"Stick it, boy," the sergeant panted between chattering teeth. "Stick, Dawson-boy —stick—laddie." Skag dug and gripped and strained, a living winch—but the slush was beginning to move.

A distant sound reached Skag's bursting ears. It came again. Some one was shouting. He wanted to look around. He daren't. A move would break the tension. The sergeant's face was becoming a dark color that frightened Skag—but he held on. Skag went into a last desperate frenzy of exertion.

A score of yaps sounded close behind. A native's cry. Skag pulled harder. His back and shoulders were bloodless. He no longer pulled wit shoulders and legs, but with relentless tenacity and sand and grit. A scrape on the ice behind him—and Skag was locked tight in a pair of arms. Then he went back—slowly at first—but back. The remaining dogs, feeling themselves being dragged to safety, joined in with a frenzied effort to help. The dripping, cowering, half-drowned wretches from the water appeared one at a time. Then when the lead-dog scrambled up over the edge, there seemed to be no one else to come.

Skag continued to hold. He was now back where the grip was good. New strength flowed through him and he battled like a soldier fresh from the rest camps. The native called encouragement, and then passed by him lying flat on an empty sledge, the sledge turned sideways to distribute the weight on the ice. The native propelled it with his hands and toes.

The sledge bridged the crack through which the sergeant had fallen. The Esquimeau reached down. A moment he remained motionless, and then Skag felt the traces slacken and fall away from the ridges they had dug in his back. He dropped. Everything, he knew, was well.

No elation did he feel nor any great sense of duty done. Just the restful feeling that comes over the workman who knows that he has done his work and knows that he has done it well.

WHEN Skag opened his eyes and looked about him, the Esquimeau was working the sergeant's arms and legs. The sergeant lay like a dead man. Skag closed his eyes.

When he opened them again, the sergeant's form was blanketed and lying on their own sledge, the load of which lay scattered about. The Esquimeau was lighting an oil brazier. Skag pulled himself across to the native, the heat would feel good, he decided. The native grinned a wide, bland grin as if to say, "Yes, just for you."

What the Esquimeau actually did, however, was to take firm hold of him and examine the injured hind leg. Then putting him down for the moment he rose and saw to the sergeant's condition, then went to the sledge and pulled out a spare parka and a square haversack. Returning to the fire, and placing a pot full of snow on it, he took hold of Skag, placed him side-down on the warm parka and proceeded to rub into the damaged member some ointment which he took from the kit.

What with the fire, the warm parka on which he lay and the ministrations of the Esquimeau, Skag began to feel quite at ease with the world. Squirming around playfully while the native treated him, he uttered many strange and throaty sounds of content.

"Well, but you're having a whale of a time." Skag turned quickly and then slunk back. The native left him and hurried to the sergeant. "Sure, I'm all right, Klaku. Just a bit groggy. Lucky—got the strength of a bronk. No, never mind me, son, I can walk." The native made as if to warn the sergeant against exertion, but the latter waved him aside and walked slowly to where Skag lay watching him covertly. As the sergeant approached he backed away.

"Aw, don't do that," the sergeant murmured, stopping short. "Golly, you'll break the little heart that's left in me." Skag remained still. Something about the sergeant's manner puzzled him. The man spoke differently. And Skag even lay quiet while the sergeant came up and squatted by his side. "Y' know, this's a blame hard country—not that I'm apologizing for myself, I know I'm a roughneck, but the blame country does sometimes make a bloody devil of a man, and it's done that for sure to me. But laddie, blast your old hide, the guts ye've shewn has taught me something. Damn you, you'd have done better to let me slide—sure you would."

At last Skag sensed what it was all about. Just what the sergeant had said he could never know, but his quick instinct and active brain told him at once that the man's attitude toward him had changed. He took a chance, and nosed the sergeant's hand. The sergeant grabbed him up and squeezed him against his chest.

Suddenly Skag wiggled loose and dashed off. Klaku was harnessing the sergeant's team. The sergeant got up and turned.

"That's the idea, Klaku, give 'em a good stiff run; only way to dry the beggars out." Then he stared and a crease came between his eyes as he watched Skag crowding the lead-dog while the native was harnessing the animal in.

"By God, that's happened before," he mused. "I've got a notion—" He walked to where the native knelt and motioned him away. Then cutting out the lead-dog he called to Skag who had retreated a few paces. Skag stood a moment, his ears pricked sharply, and then he sprung—clean into the lead traces.

"Well, wouldn't that beat the devil. He wants to be a lead-dog. Well, buck, from now on you are the lead-dog. And what's more," he added with a grin at Klaku and a pat on Skag's panting head, "you'll do all the choosing of the ice from now on. Ah, it's a great world, Klaku," said he, getting slowly to his feet while Skag waited impatiently for the start. "Well, well—did you bring the dispatches, Klaku?" he asked suddenly. The big envelope was produced.

Opening it, the sergeant drew out a sheaf of papers and a small envelop.

"General Orders and one letter. Shame to bring you all the way just for that, Klaku. Well, let's see who's written me a letter. What the devil," he exclaimed opening the note, "it's from old Holton at Dawson. What's this? Sending me the best lead-dog in the division—take good care of him—name Skag . . .?" The sergeant turned slowly and called: "Skag!" Skag spun sharply, hearing his name for the first time in months. The sergeant turned away again with bewilderment on his countenance.

"By golly, but the Irish are a pig-headed race—sure they are—and me in particular."

The Pink Alligator

[*Continued from page 85*]

Her eyes lifted with a start, and he was looking right at her. He had never attempted an experiment more successful. That precipitate of soft rose-petal pink suffusing Nancy's cheek . . . And then, like Old Doc Jedlicke, she clapped her hands over her ears.

Marble, brass, onyx and crystal—the Giltledge, but Jim wanted only to be quit of Oliver, at last, finally, and forever. In his room, first thing, he called up the Bronx Zoo. He desired the curator of reptiles to send for Oliver while Oliver, happily, was still available. But he couldn't get the curator of reptiles, for the reason that the curator had left for the day. Furthermore, there was no one else around who could, or would, consent to come for Oliver. Insidious fate seemed working in this. Jim knew in his soul something would happen.

Something did.

HE WENT out for a bite of supper, locking the door, and when he returned, Oliver was gone. Oliver's camera house was under the bed, where Jim had shoved it, but Oliver was not inside. The box lay on its side, which was due to his own absent-mindedness when pushing it out of sight with his foot, and the slide, because of the broken lock, had slipped partly out. So Claxton had had nothing to do with it; Oliver's own idea, entirely. He hunted high and low and on the bias, but no Oliver. A window on a fire-escape was up six inches. A maid might have been in, and left the door ajar for a moment. He went to the telephone and called down to the office and requested that they send a boy up to help him hunt for a pink alligator.

"Hunt—hunt? . . . I beg your pardon, but what was that you said?" asked the girl at the switchboard, and Jim carefully repeated that he had lost a pink alligator. . . . He got no farther. "I—I . . . Hold the line. My hearing musta done a flop," said the girl.

He heard voices in discussion down there, after which a man's voice replaced the girl's.

"This is the room clerk," announced the man. "What was that you lost, if you please?"

"An alligator, a pink one. And if you don't know what that is, it's a lizard, an albino lizard. A pink alligator lizard."

The clerk knew vaguely that an alligator was a lizard, but being an Easterner, he knew nothing of the alligator lizard. In all his natural history he had never dreamed of one.

"Alligator lizard—lizard alligator—pink alligator lizard?" he echoed a bit wildly. "Yes, yes, one minute, please."

But the management hung up on him, and he had to go down. The suave gentleman, who functioned as lubricant for the management, awaited him in the lobby, but his urbanity, Jim felt, was almost too ingratiating. There was a trick in it somewhere. And a lower browed individual stood by, who was not urbane.

"Yes, yes, yes," said the lubricant consolingly. "We will do our utmost—our very utmost. Now if you will be so good, Mr. Nolan, kindly describe the missing property to Mr. Stultz here." He indicated the lower browed man. "Mr. Stultz is the house detective."

"But I'm afraid Oliver—that's the pink alligator—won't wait," said Jim. "No telling where he'll be getting to while I keep on doing this describing."

"Then you do mean an alligator?" gruffly asked Mr. Stultz.

"Lizard, then. How many times—"

"Yes, I know an alligator's a lizard," said Mr. Stultz. He leaned close and sniffed at Jim's breath, after which he looked at the lubricant and shook his head. "Naw, 'tain't hooch," he said.

"A lizard," asserted Jim earnestly, "about nine inches long."

"Huh," growled the detective, "so now it's shrunk to nine inches. This alligator is disappearing fast. 'Nother minute and it won't even be pink."

"But it is pink, or pinkish," Jim maintained. He strove to be convincing, and gave them the scientific term for a clincher. "It's an albino, otherwise an example of leucopathia."

"Lu-lu—lu-co—lo-co . . . Gawd," said Mr. Stultz, "listen to him now! He's starting to talk gibberish. What we thought, Mr. Wineburn, this bird's off his bean. He sure is."

Mr. Wineburn, the lubricant, looked his oily regret, but he too feared as much. The gathering of interested onlookers stirred expectantly. One of these spoke up.

"Oh, I say"—it was Claxton—"oh, I say, maybe you are right. Awful queer, way he's acted. Rawther! Jumped overboard, you know, in pursuit of an airplane."

"Naturally," Jim promptly confirmed this testimony. "Because you were trying to steal it, you grinning buzzard."

"Steal what?"

"Why, the pink alligator. For all I know, you've got it now."

They shook their heads sorrowfully. As though losing a pink alligator were not enough, he was accusing bystanders of stealing it.

"Oh, I say," exclaimed Claxton, "watch him. He may get violent, you know."

Mr. Wineburn's shoulders expressed complete resignation. These things will happen, even in the best lubricated hotels. Since it was a situation that had to be met. . . . He stepped over to the switchboard.

"Police headquarters," he said to the girl. "Tell them to send the wagon. Tell them it's a nut for Bellevue."

"Good eye!" and Mr. Claxton nodded approvingly. But there was a triumphant something in his own eye as he hurried toward the elevators and Jim started to follow him but was restrained by various members of the Giltledge's strong-arm force, including Mr. Stultz, the chief porter, and the colossal doorman.

"Can't you imbeciles understand?" protested Jim as he struggled. "I left my room unlocked and it's his chance to steal that alligator," but they exchanged pitying grins and tightened their hold on Jim.

"There, there," Mr. Wineburn exuded solace, "you will hear the little birdies sing at Bellevue."

Waiting for the wagon, Jim gave over trying to tell them the truth. To humor him, they did call up the curator of reptiles, but the curator of reptiles was dining out, and as the truth was more than one sane man could put across, Jim continued waiting, perforce, for the wagon. But Mr. Claxton arrived first. Returning among them Mr. Claxton had not delayed to descend by an elevator. The stairs were already there, and being in haste, he used them; or that is, about every fourth one, his long legs having a wide spread. Hard blown and bulging eyed, he arrived.

"Men," he managed between long wheezing breaths, "it's a snake! Ugh, snake, snake—a pink snake!"

"Gawd save us," groaned Mr. Stultz, "here's another guy gone cuckoo!"

"Snake—snake—pink snake!" Claxton wildly insisted.

"Sure, buddy, sure!" Stultz agreed, getting him firmly by the arm. "I know, it was the one with purple stripes."

"No stripes. You're crazy," said Claxton. "Who ever heard of a snake with purple stripes? It was pink, I tell you. I saw it's long loathsome—ugh!—pink tail as it went sliding into a bureau drawer."

"Sure, sure," Stultz agreed some more, signing to the doorman to fasten on Claxton's other arm.

Jim found himself momentarily ignored, and free. He did not wait. He faded from there like a shadow—into an elevator, up to his floor, into his room. "Bureau drawer," Claxton had said. An alligator lizard's tail, if that was all Claxton saw, would have looked exactly like a disappearing snake. Jim had left one of the bureau drawers partly open when searching for Oliver, and inside there, in a far corner, he now discovered the little creature. Still and watchful it was, the tiny pink beads of eyes unblinking. Jim put the empty camera, with slide up, in the drawer, and with a straw from his whisk broom for goad, patiently and gently herded the truant Oliver into the inviting darkness of the box.

"Oh," a voice exclaimed softly over his shoulder as he pushed home the slide, "so that's your fatal secret!"

Miss Nancy Perkins had tiptoed in, and she was aquiver with excitement.

"Come—hurry!" she urged. "They're loading

Mr. Claxton into the wagon now and they'll be looking for you."

"Claxton?"

"And objecting most awful. He showed them his star, but that didn't help. The policemen told him secret service men didn't see pink snakes, and bundled him right into the Black Maria."

THIS bulletin from the front brought the first smile in a half hour to Jim Nolan's spectacled visage, and as smiles went, it was beatific.

"Good old Oliver," he murmured fondly.

They escaped by the service stairs, Jim carrying the boxed Oliver under his arm, and by taxi they voyaged Bronx-ward to the residence of the curator of reptiles. When the curator returned from his dinner party, he cheerfully accepted delivery of Oliver, signing a receipt for "one pink alligator lizard."

"My passport," said Jim, carefully stowing away the paper. "Now they'll have to believe I'm sane."

Miss Perkins was taken with the giggles at that, and the curator not understanding, she sailed in and recited the Odyssey of Oliver. Then the curator clapped Jim on the shoulder and said:

"Pink alligator or message to Garcia—same thing. You are a deliverer of goods. In exchange for Oliver, would you like to take back to Sunset Harbor with you the high-land moccasin, the garter, and the king snakes?"

Jim thanked him, but no, he told him, he believed not.

Naturally a deliverer of goods would be able to put over a small item such as an ant killer with even a big and awesome concern such as Chenault & Massey, Manufacturing Chemists. Yet, even there, dear little Oliver wiggled into the situation. Helpfully, too. It seemed that insecticides were out of the C. & M. line, and the atmosphere was austere and conservative, with Mr. Chenault sitting bolt upright in his swivel chair like a frozen obelisk and emitting a non-committal "Heh-hem" to everything Jim said about the ant spray, so that at last Jim was goaded past modesty and was driven to brag a little. That is, he informed Mr. Chenault that the Biff people had made overtures to acquire the spray.

"Not very seriously, I think," replied the obelisk. "Oh, yes, perhaps a tentative letter or two. But those people—heh-hem—when they want a thing, they send after it, and, usually they get it. They sent Claxton."

"Claxton?" ejaculated Jim.

"Claxton, yes. He's their handy man. Big-Wind Claxton. Scouting, scalping, that's Claxton. But seeing that you're not scalped—"

"Wait," said Jim. "A young lady came with me here. She's in the outer office. I've come a long way, Mr. Chenault, for this talk with you, so might I ask your indulgence before you turn me off? Please send for Miss Nancy Perkins, in your outer office."

The obelisk heh-hemmed, and sent for Miss Nancy Perkins.

"Recite," said Jim, "the Odyssey of Oliver."

Mr. Chenault obviously approved highly of Nancy, but he couldn't see why he should be recited to during office hours—that is not at first. Then he did. And besides, Nancy was a most rapturous and prepossessing reciter. Before your eyes you could have seen the stony obelisk crumbling. And when the tale was ended:

"Claxton, you say the fellow's name was?"

"Yes. A long-legged man. He might have been an undertaker," said Nancy, "dressed up like a bookmaker."

Mr. Chenault turned quickly to Jim. He was thoroughly warmed through by now.

"Claxton was after your formulas, notes, drawings, blue prints. He jumped to the conclusion, quite naturally, that you carried them in that camera."

Jim laughed. It was a joke on Claxton.

"You see," he explained, "old Doc Jedlicke and I, we've made up so many batches of the spray that I didn't put anything on paper. Quantities, proportions, temperatures, every little movement at every stage in the process, I've got pat in my head."

"Good," said Mr. Chenault, with relief.

"Turn me loose in your laboratory and I'll make up a batch for you."

"Good," said Mr. Chenault again, heartily this time. "If the Biff outfit wanted your spray that bad—heh-hem, I wonder how long they'll hold Mr. Claxton for impersonating an officer?"

Returning to the Giltledge in the taxi, Nancy beside him, Jim remarked hesitantly, that there was another selling talk still before him, and since she had helped him so much already, would she—would she—

"Oh, you still have something to sell?"

"I'm not a good liar," Jim gravely explained, "and in this case the goods require some right tall and convincing misrepresentation."

"Now I see," said Nancy, as though she hadn't before. "You want to go courting. Think of that—the Girl-proof Wonder, the Great Unkissed—"

A girl, of course, can go only so far. But this was farther. Right there in the traffic of Park Row, Jim seized this girl and kissed her until she kissed him back.

"Oh, dear me," sighed Miss Nancy Perkins of Hollywood, "I didn't want to begin marrying for quite a long while yet."

"Just this once," pleaded Jim.

"Just once only," Nancy agreed, softly, tenderly, fervently.

Obstacles Cut No Ice With Them

[*Continued from page 86*]

There can be no question about Joe Moore's being an ardent baseball fan of long standing. If properly approached he may be induced to show you his boyhood treasure. He will fumble through some old letters and then with a half sheepish grin unearth a crumpled sheet of paper headed, "Philadelphia, July 7, 1917," and reading as follows:

> HELLO JOE:
>
> I hope you keep on playing ball as you will soon be big enough to get in some small league and from there to the big league. So keep up your good work, Joe. With best wishes,
>
> Your friend,
>
> J. HANS WAGNER.

Into the "big league" Joe broke, all right, but it was in skating, not baseball. Baseball, boxing and swimming are understandable sequels to a lively boyhood on New York's river front. But where does skating come in? Boys are lucky if the weather permits two whole weeks of outdoor ice during an average winter. And skating rinks, of course, cost money that the average boy can't spend that way. The puzzle becomes all the greater when you learn that Joe Moore was fourteen years old before he had ever been on a pair of skates. His principal acquaintance with ice was by way of the old ice cart that used to lurch down Eighth Avenue on hot summer days, with the kids fighting on the rear step for chips of ice.

Two years later Joe Moore was winning races in competition with some of the speediest skaters in America. It was probably the last thing his family would have predicted. At fourteen he was getting to be a big boy and he didn't care so much for school. Oh well, said the family, if he insisted on going to work why not let him go? So early one morning his mother, skimming through the help-wanted ads, carefully tore out a speck of paper and hauled young Joe out of bed.

"Take this," she commanded briefly. "The St. Nicholas skating rink wants an office boy." The St. Nicholas skating rink was fairly near, much nearer than the big offices downtown where most of youthful Manhattan starts an office-boy career.

"Hurry up now, Joey," she said. "Maybe you can get the job."

Joe hustled into his short pants, dove out of the house, and was the first boy in line. He got the job. If it had been a Wall Street brokerage firm Joe had headed for so enthusiastically, he might have gone through life without ever knowing the feel of winged steel blades underfoot, screaming across the ice. So much for chance.

It was some time before young Joe ventured upon a pair of skates at the rink. He did his work as well as he could and that kept him busy. But he loved, in odd moments, to watch Norval Baptie, the professional champion, flash the length of the ice. "Gee, but that guy sure can show speed," he used to comment to himself. "He goes along so nice and easy, too. It doesn't look hard." In due time it was natural that some of his youthful allegiance to Hans Wagner, the baseball hero, should have been transferred to Norval Baptie.

"I decided I wanted to be a great skater like him," Moore explains. "For some reason he took an interest in me. After I learned to skate well enough to keep my feet for five minutes at a time, Baptie entered me in a novice race. He gave me a pair of skates because I hadn't any of my own. I didn't win the race but I managed somehow to scramble in second, and two weeks later I won a handicap race."

The speed and endurance of this slight, apparently frail boy began to cause comment. They say that after the first novice race of his career, Norval Baptie predicted that with time and practice the youngster would beat the whole world on ice. What elusive quality could an expert such as Baptie discern in the wild, formless scampering of a fourteen-year-old kid? Perhaps it was some of his father's stamina coming to the surface. The elder Moore, born in Glasgow, was at one time a champion long-distance walker in Europe. But one cannot overlook the West Forty-seventh Street background. It's a good schooling in adaptability. Obstacles don't seem to matter much.

Moore won his first race on ice in 1916. To-day he is acknowledged to be the speediest indoor skater this country has ever produced. Nor is it wholly a matter of speed. There's a canny generalship that goes with this. For example, it is his short choppy strokes which keep followers at bay on the turns.

Indoor ice finds Moore at his best. On outdoor ice he has his off days and off years, which is the way of skating. Yet on outdoor ice he has smashed a number of world records, including the amateur record for the mile. It was in 1921 that he skated this distance in two minutes and forty-eight seconds. The former mark had stood unassailed since the year 1879. Moore was in amazingly good form in 1921. That was the year he captured both the International Indoor and International Outdoor championships.

Two years before, Moore had taken a winter job as bell-hop in a Lake Placid hotel that he might become better acquainted with outdoor ice. It was at Lake Placid that he subsequently broke world records for the quarter mile and three mile, a fairly good indication of his all-around ability on ice.

There is a very considerable list of titles, both indoor and outdoor, ranging from the Metropolitan championship to the International, for which an amateur skater can compete. Joe Moore, at one time or another, has held every one of them, including the Canadian championship. And Canada is a place where boys are brought up on the ice. During the past eight years Moore has acquired probably a greater assortment of titles and medals than any other speed skater in North America.

He can't tell you exactly where he gets his speed, which is by no means an unusual way with champions. But there are some things worth knowing about his training.

Joe Moore neither smokes nor drinks. Tobacco cuts the wind, he explains, and he has never had any hankering for liquor. He does admit to a craving for sugar cookies and cream puffs. And having discovered in his mature twenties that the city of New York is not all the world, he likes to take long hikes in the country. Not long ago he walked from New York to Lake Placid, nearly three hundred miles.

"I guess there's a good deal of hobo in me," Moore remarks. "It's a lot of fun, tramping over the hills, through strange towns and cities. I sort of hate to come back. Walking's good training for skating, too. Naturally, it develops the legs. I guess that's one reason why the Finns are the greatest skaters in the world. They do a lot of walking.

"You've got to have confidence in yourself to get anywhere in skating. Those Finnish skaters in the Olympics were the most confident bunch I ever met. They were dead sure of themselves, always knew what they could do."

Lack of confidence is an abiding fault of the average person who is just beginning to skate. There are few sports of which this is true to so great an extent.

"Yes," adds Moore, "lack of confidence keeps a good many people from even attempting to skate. That's mighty foolish. Anybody can develop into a very good straight-ahead skater in a single season if he has confidence and keeps at it." Moore's career would seem to indicate that he has never lacked this essential.

"Another excuse is weak ankles," he continues. "I don't think much of that either. Of course, some ankles are not so strong as others, but most anybody can get along all right if he will take things easy at first. Give the ankle and leg muscles a chance to develop. Dancing, walking and bicycle riding all help.

"Anybody just taking up skating should buy a pair of plain hockey skates and practice standing up straight on them. It's like bicycle riding; you've got to get a sense of balance first. Along with balance comes a sense of direction. When you reach the point where the skates travel where you want them to, you can work up your speed.

"Before tackling figure skating you've got to be pretty good at the straight stuff. Of course, the kind of blade you use makes a lot of difference in figure skating. You're skating on the edge of the blade and making turns all the time. The flat-bladed hockey skates should be changed to a pair of skates that have a good deal of curvature. That makes the turns come easily. And you should wear a pair of special figure-skating shoes, the high kind that come well up on the legs."

JOE MOORE'S interest and skill have always been concentrated upon the acquirement of straight-ahead speed—speed and more speed. But recently he has been taking up figure skating for the first time. To all intents he might be called a novice in this specialized phase of skating.

Yet when you watch him cut intricate figures on ice and realize the great amount of painstaking practice this art demands, you would think he had been at it for years. He says that it seems easy. The reason is obvious. Although figure skating is radically different from speed skating in various respects, the latter has given him confidence, balance, control, direction, speed, and wise distribution of effort. He applies these essentials to a new set of conditions.

Men who have spent half a lifetime both practicing and teaching figure work on ice declare that perfection is more difficult of attainment than in the case of any other sport in existence. Because of his standing as a leading professional instructor of long experience, the opinion of Victor Saron has special interest. Years ago, in Canada, Saron was private instructor to the Duke of Connaught and Princess Patricia. At present he teaches in New York. Here it was that he discovered and taught Frieda Petersen, the professional figure skater, how to skate.

"It's the most difficult sport in the world," says Saron. "I play golf, too, so perhaps I'm in a position to make some manner of comparison. Correct balance is the vital requisite. Of course, balance is mighty important in golf. But there's this difference. In the golf swing you have only one balance: the comparatively simple follow through from your left foot to the right. But in skating your balance is constantly changing. You have counter-balance as well as balance. Every muscle of the body from the big toe of your free leg to the eyes, is in play continually. Especially important is the way you use your eyes."

I asked Saron to give a rough estimate of how long it would take a beginner of average ability to put on a creditable performance in figure skating.

"It doesn't take very long for a person to reach the stage of making a turn on one foot. That gives him a big thrill and he immediately thinks he knows it all. But when he has been at figure skating for about ten years he probably decides that he doesn't know much of anything about it. Supremely good skaters are as scarce as the Pavlowas of dancing."

Frieda Petersen is acknowledged to be one of the most accomplished figure skaters in the United States and Canada. You might consider her one of the "supremely good skaters," Saron mentioned. Yet she says:

"I really know very little about skating. It's a life study and I've hardly more than begun. No one can ever hope to learn it all. Perhaps that's one reason why it is such an engrossing sport. It's like some wonderful tonic."

If you are a beginner at figure skating, it would help you to watch Miss Petersen give an exhibition. You may feel encouraged afterwards to remember that when she came to this country from Denmark, nine years ago, she could hardly stand up straight on a pair of skates and had never tried to cut a figure. This all goes to show (as in the case of Joe Moore) what interest and perseverence will do.

Figure skating represents a rare combination of elements in sport. It combines a fair amount of ease and no great demands of skill in getting started, with a "kick" that never ceases to exist, and a goal that is never arrived at.

There is a curious bit of history attached to modern figure skating. Although it is an ancient art, its present grace and rhythm dates only from the early sixties of the last century. An American dancing master by the name of Jackson Haines at that time evolved new ideas in balance and movements of the human body on skates which revolutionized the sport.

These ideas did not attract much attention in this country. We were busy fighting the Civil War. Haines went abroad and taught Europe how to skate. His style became generally adopted, even in the small hamlets of Germany and Russia.

Haines's methods, being practiced all over Europe for a half century and more, remained almost unknown in the United States until about twenty years ago. Then we began to relearn our own stuff from Europe. At present, his is the commonly accepted style of figure skating.

Haines was a dancing master. Now figure skating is nothing more nor less than dancing on ice. The rhythm and movements are identical. A short slide in inches on the wood floor becomes a long glide of feet or yards on ice; that is the chief difference. Both arts have unlimited possibilities. In both cases there is opportunity for endless variety. At one end of a skating rink you will find a couple dancing on ice to jazz music, while at the other end a skater is cutting a figure, following the lines of classic dancing.

IN SPITE of the apparent complexity of figure skating, says Victor Saron, there is a good deal of simplicity about the foundation upon which it is built. It is all based on the skater's ability to balance and turn on the four edges of his skates. Even the most intricate figures are but an application of these fundamental movements.

Get the rudiments, say experts, and you will have a clear understanding of the structure on ice you are trying to build. These rudiments consist of a realization of the meaning of "edge" skating.

There are two edges to the blade of a skate: the inside edge on the inner side of the foot and the outside edge on the outer side. In plain, straight-ahead skating, no special significance is attached to these edges; the width of the blade usually rests flat upon the ice. In figure skating, precisely the opposite holds true. Observe the movements of a figure skater swooping around a circle. You will note that the body is balanced to a nicety upon either the inside or outside edge of the skate. Only by tilting the skate in this manner is it possible to hold the balance and describe your circle. This applies just as much to any one of two or three hundred different ice figures as to a simple circle.

"If you get on the flat of your skate," says one instructor breezily, "you're licked. You lose balance and crash."

Four respective movements in the tilting of the blade are the basis of all figure skating. These are as follows: skating on the outside edge forward, inside edge forward, outside edge backward and inside edge backward.

Take the case of waltzing on ice. The waltz step consists of the following movements: a curved glide forward on one edge (say, the right outside edge) which is followed by a turn to the inside backward edge of the same skate, followed by a long glide backward on the outside edge of the other skate.

"Practice and continue to practice skating on the four edges, forward and backward, to the right and to the left," advises Saron. "That's what makes a figure skater. The most difficult of these to learn correctly is the outside edge forward. The two forward edges (inside and outside) should be learned first. Then the two backward edges will follow with a fair amount of ease."

A series of half circles known as the "roll" movement is commonly recommended as valuable beginning technique. You practice one series of arcs down the length of the ice on the two outside edges forward and then later you do the same thing on the two inside edges forward. At the end of each arc, the unemployed foot is brought to the ice and becomes the skating foot. Similarly, there is a change in balance. The tilt of the body is toward the inside of any arc being described.

The body, nicely balanced above the thin edge of a skate, is compared by Saron to a pair of scales. The unemployed leg, more significantly called the balance leg, is to all intents one of the scales. It should be held out and back, the requisite distance above the ice to give proper balance, though requirements in this respect are variable. When this free foot is about to take to ice, it should be swung forward gradually but not past the skating leg until the time comes to bring it into action.

The same requirements hold true in cutting a figure "eight," "three," or any number of more complicated designs. Both the skating leg and unemployed leg should be slightly bent, the hands outstretched at about hip height with palms down, the head erect and the eyes looking in the direction you are going. It is an illuminating experience to watch closely an expert figure skater on the ice. Then you realize the truth of Saron's statement that all the muscles, from the big toe of the balance foot to the eyes, are in constant play. And if they seem to work at cross purposes during your first awkward attempts, there is consolation in the knowledge that the Joe Moores and Frieda Petersens were once beginners too.

The Vogue of the Valentine

[*Continued from page 41*]

though signed by a butler and addressed, doubtless, to the parlor-maid. The words are—

I keep the keys of the cellar
  Of both the ale and the wine,
And I'll share a bottle with you, my dear,
  Whenever you so incline.
Of cyder I have store,
  Chose your own sort of wine,
And we will merry be, my lovely Valentine.

Millions of postcard valentines are mailed in the United States each year, Mr. Whitney declared.

"But there is not such a demand for them since the postal rates were increased," he continued. "The five-and-ten-cent cards sold in the nickel-and-dime stores always go in enormous quantities. A quarter of a century ago the price of valentines often ran as high as fifty dollars for elaborate creations of celluloid, satin and plush. Farmers favored them. Miners and lumbermen in the West and Southwest mortgaged their pay envelopes far in advance to pay for these particularly gaudy specimens. The man in the leather vest would buy them on the instalment plan. By that I mean that he would pay a deposit long before the first of February and the balance down when the day arrived. City folks never really cared for this sort of valentine. They vanished about 1910. Plush banners had a vogue about 1890 and usually cost from eighteen to twenty dollars.

Ever since George C. Whitney planted his carpet bag firmly on a Chicago street corner that city has been a flourishing valentine center. Seemingly less sophisticated than New York, it takes its romance in happier fashion and in larger quantities.

Late in life, when Mr. Whitney enlarged his activities to include Christmas and Easter cards, he found that Chicago cared practically nothing about the last two novelties although it never failed to buy valentines. Several men who tried to introduce Christmas cards came to grief. At last a man named Keeley was sent out, but the orders still failed to come in. Mr. Whitney demanded an explanation. This is the fretful wire he received from Mr. Keeley:

"No call for Easter or Christmas cards. One-half Chicago does not know Christ was born. Others have not heard of death."

Although valentines were first introduced on the continent the custom of sending them is now dead in England, Germany, France and other foreign countries. Manufactures and imports alike are at a standstill. But the custom is said to have been revived recently in England.

Despite the present popularity of the valentine the subject has seldom tempted collectors to gather rare and lovely old specimens of other ages. Verses of many centuries have lived, but not their settings. Doubtless many of these are buried in ancient trunks or are held in oblivion between the golden clasps of ancient albums.

Queen Victoria is one of the few valentine collectors on record. A number of faded old beauties were discovered among her personal belongings after her death. The Boston Athenæum has one of the only interesting collections in the United States, and the British Museum preserves the verses of Charles II of Orleans, and this five-hundred-year-old valentine which John Lydgers sent to Catherine, Queen of stout King Harry V, in 1420:

Seynte Valentine of custom years by years
Men have an usuance in this regionn
To look and serche Cupid's Kallendre
And chose theyr choyse as ther art doth falle
But I love oon which excelleth all.

At the Wheel with a Lady Skipper

[*Continued from page 16*]

Philadelphia and Boston to take the "Little Commodore's" picture. She was written up in everything from the old New York *Mercury* to the *Police Gazette*.

What the contemporary reporters thought of her is seen in the following excerpt from a Southern paper of 1894, written in the flowery journalistic style of twenty years ago:

"With her hand on the wheel let Captain Blanche Leathers, the most distinguished among Louisiana's women, be described. A slight figure, five feet-five inches in height, with the contour of charming womanhood, small, white, well kept, and perfectly moulded hands ornamented with two handsome diamond rings; a face grand, true, and ennobling to look upon; a fair skin glowing with the pink hue of health, perfect teeth and a full red-lipped mouth that tell the story of a woman born to love, to feel, and to act kindly toward all humanity. Her hair, a soft brown tinged with gold is worn in pompadour style with innumerable, soft wind-kissed tendrils resting on brow and cheek. . . . Captain Blanche is the angel of the Mississippi River. Everybody loves her, everybody honors her and the discipline of the *Natchez* is perfect when she is on deck."

Interviews with her appeared in Northern papers. Travelers brought autograph albums for her to sign. Little girls begged for a lock of her hair. Little boys rushed down to the landings to watch the "lady captain" go by. People of wealth and social prominence would make the trip up the river at least once a year. Every kind of celebrity was included on the passenger list from famous race-horse men and vaudeville singers up to Jeff Davis, the ex-president of the Confederacy, who made his last trip to his Mississippi home on the *Natchez*.

"He gave me a bottle of champagne to use at the christening of my first baby," says Mrs. Leathers, "and," she adds with a wry little smile, "I have it yet. It has never been opened."

FROM New Orleans to Vicksburg is Mrs. Leathers' regular run. She knows the river from the stilted houses of Pilot Town, where the Mississippi empties into the Gulf and where it is said that every child is born with an oar in his mouth, to the bluffs above Vicksburg, where sixteen thousand Confederate and Union dead lie asleep in the National Cemetery. Every village, every negro cabin, every great plantation with its sugar furnace and its graceful galleried mansion set in groves of magnolias, is but an incident in her day, as other women mark time by the market man, the ice man, the laundry man and the baby's milk. She is known to every planter, every shipper, every pilot, every hound dog, and every darkey with a banjo all along the shores.

Before anyone had ever heard of "executive jobs," Mrs. Leathers held one. An office manager or even a bank president had nothing on her in the business of handling men. At one time she was master of four clerks, two pilots, two mates, two engineers, a corps of stewards, twenty or thirty deck hands, more than five hundred passengers and the steamboat *Natchez*.

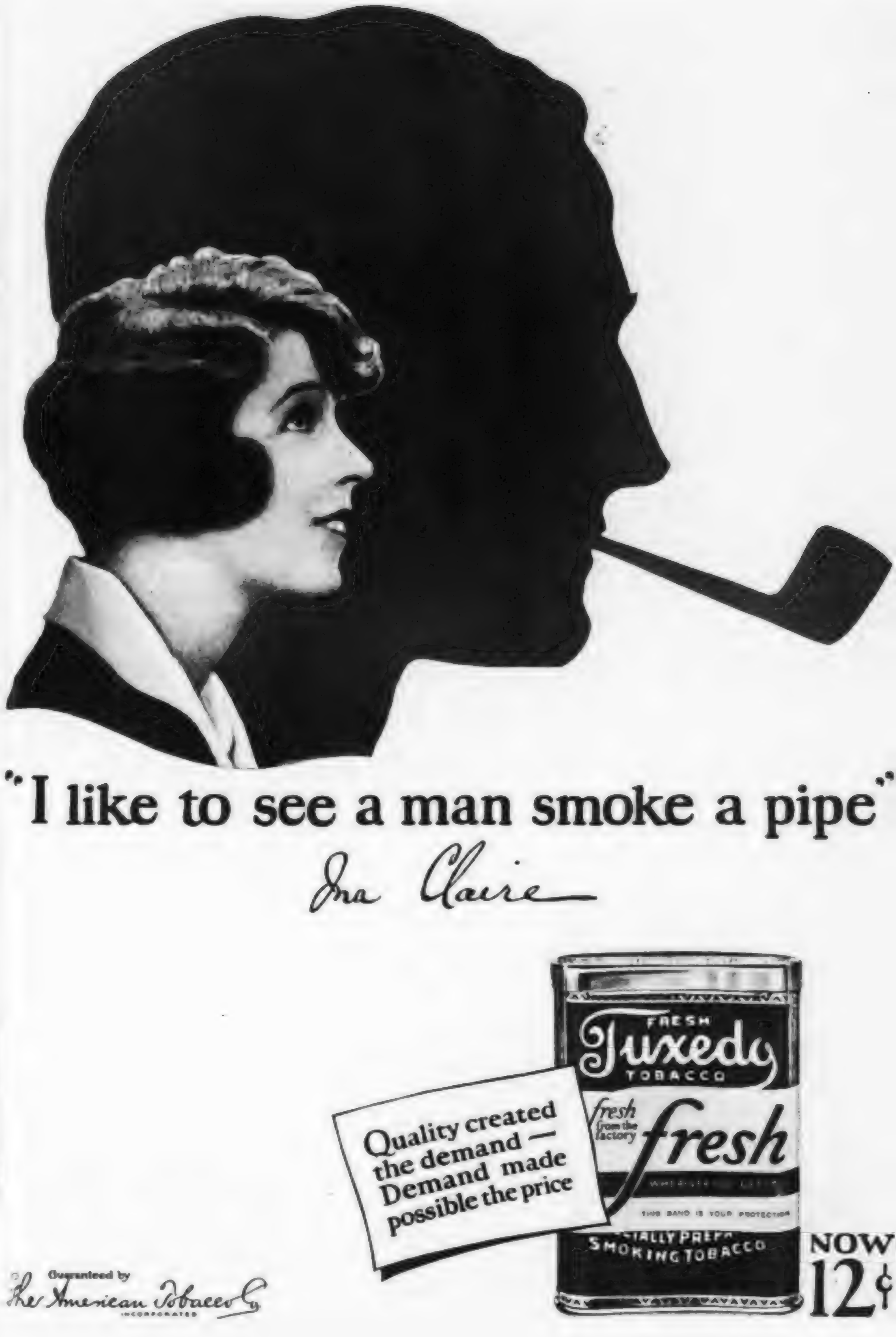
A master pilot has perhaps more responsibility than any other person in the world. "When the captain takes his oath of office he must remember that he quite literally pledges his life to his ship," says Mrs. Leathers. "In case of emergency he must be the last human being to leave. I have known pilots burned to death from a boiler explosion because they would not leave the wheel. Captains go down with their ships as a matter of course. It is never considered anything extraordinary. And then, how perfectly you must know the river! Mark Twain used to say that you must learn the shape of it as you do that of your own front hall—so you can come in after dark and not bump yourself, even though they have moved the chairs around."

When you talk to a river captain, or a cabin boy or a roustabout you realize what an enormous influence one of the world's great rivers has upon the lives along its shores. That is why rivers like the Rhine, the Congo, the Yang Tse, the Ganges are so closely interwoven with the history of nations.

Success and failure, careers and crimes, births, marriages and deaths are but incidents in the larger life of the river. All human life is but an episode in its tremendous history.

"It was the year the Jackson plantation was flooded," they will say in the Mississippi valley; or "Jack ran away from home the last High Water;" "Jenny married the year the *Gold Dust* went ashore at Memphis; "Kate's baby was born the year of the Poydras break." So it has also been, undoubtedly, along the shores of the Volga, the Danube, the Nile. Great rivers have a personality of their own.

"People ask me if I wouldn't rather be a sea captain," says Mrs. Leathers, "and I tell them, no. The sea is one thing, the river another. The sea is so big that it is never anything but a stranger. Whereas the river is like a person. It has character, judgment, charm. What other body of water is constantly changing its bed, not only lengthwise but sideways? What other river literally makes channels and islands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fresh
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SMOKING TOBACCO

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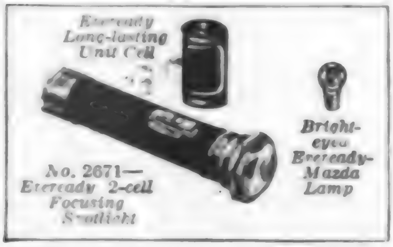
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over night? No pilot can ever master the Mississippi. It has changed before he makes his next trip. And this gives continual zest to the thing. You never get tired of your work, because it is eternally different."

Although she has succeeded in a man's job and practically lives in a man's world, Mrs. Leathers is far from being a feminist. She attributes her prowess entirely to her husband, Captain Bowling Leathers, a famous river captain in his day, who died ten years ago.

"He was a much better captain than I am," she asserts. "He taught me everything I know. I would stand beside him at the wheel and repeat to him each snag, each bank, each plantation, each landing place. He taught me to steer at night when it was so dark you couldn't see your hand before your face.

"Again I quote Mark Twain who said a true pilot must gauge the rise and fall of the water by the trees along the bank, and recognize a bank that had caved in or a stone that had changed its place. You must learn to read the face of the water like a book, learn the meaning of every shallow, every ripple, every shoal. A sudden dimple in the water may mean a snag that will tear the lining from your boat and send you all to Kingdom Come. A shadow on the water that a landsman would not even see may mean a change of channel.

"A fallen tree or a stump out of place may mean a cut-off that will shorten your journey twenty miles or lengthen it by thirty. The Mississippi is always changing its shape, always making new cut-offs, new channels, new banks. You will suddenly see an island in the middle of the stream that was never there before. It is born out of the river since your last trip.

"You must know every inch of the river so accurately that you will not be deceived by fogs that magnify objects, or moonlight that throws deceptive shadows, or midnight that makes the bank of the river look ten feet higher than it is. Just as you must learn the river going up you must memorize it coming down. You must be able suddenly to take the watch, look at a misty rock or a bluff on the river bank and know exactly where you are. There is no taking chances when you are responsible for human lives. You can't guess at these things You have to know them. The worry and anxiety used to keep me awake nights when I first started in. What if I should run aground or, worse still, run into the levee? What if I should run up a sluice and not be able to get back into deep water again?"

MRS. LEATHERS did not take up captaining as a stunt or even as a profession. Nothing could have been farther from her thoughts when she left her father's plantation in Tensas Parish, Louisiana, to marry young Captain Leathers who had recently been appointed master on one of his father's boats. No bride could have had a more luxurious bungalow. On the *Natchez* she had her own suite, her own maid, her own piano and the excitement of asking any of her friends or family to join her in her new moving home. The *Natchez* boasted real silver and real linen. The stewards corralled fresh game and chicken, cream and eggs and fruit.

It was a thrilling life for a young bride. Music and parties they had in plenty, for river travel was both popular and fashionable in those days. They could tie up along the landings and invite friends from the plantations to dinner on deck and to dance afterward. The negro deck hands could make jazz music long before the word was ever coined—banjos, guitars and the sweet, lilting, African voices would stir the swamps with echoes and set the mocking-birds to singing in the palmettos along the shore. A few days in Vicksburg, a few days in New Orleans at the end of a run—what bride ever had a more enchanting experience? It was like being queen of a magic carpet.

But it wasn't all fun. By degrees the captain's wife became the captain's right-hand "man." The *Natchez* was like a huge feudal estate, an estate that moved and had a continual change of guests. It represented housekeeping on a gigantic scale, marketing in huge amounts, bookkeeping that took the entire time of two experienced clerks. The cargo, whether cotton, sugar or rice, required an endless amount of attention and supervision. All the way up the river they would find the signal lanterns lit at the landings for them to come ashore for cargo. And then there would be the business of backing into the landing stage and the long process of loading. The negroes moved in rhythmical line to a monotonous, beautiful little tune while they toted the cotton bales aboard.

"Often now people talk of the beauties of jazz," says Mrs. Leathers, "and I wish they could hear the negro roustabouts unloading cotton. It is jazz, pure and simple, to a rhythmic little croon and a shuffling little step. They can never unload without music."

The planters were dependent upon the river steamers for their mail and their entire touch with the outside world. "Today since the railroads have come in that is no longer true," explained Mrs. Leathers, "but in the Nineties the big plantations were isolated from one another. They depended upon us for news of every kind. We would father little tidbits of information, friendly, neighborhood gossip from the various landings, and carry it farther up stream. Today I sometimes start up in my sleep thinking I hear that long, musical cry from a negro along shore signaling us to land at his master's plantation 'Steaa-am boat, ahooy!'"

The Leathers were fortunate in being the owners of their boat so that they escaped the fluctuating salaries and the frequent changes of a river pilot's life. Mrs. Leathers was constantly taking her trick at the wheel, learning to take soundings, learning signals—all the intricate details of the craft.

"Gradually I learned as much about the boat as my husband knew," says Mrs. Leathers. "Sometimes an emergency arose when he was called off the boat on business and the law required us to have someone with a captain's license on board. It is always trying to have a new hand, especially one who does not know every nook and crevice of the boat as the captain does. In such cases the captain is a mere figure-head. I had to do the actual commanding or coaching as we call it. Finally, my husband and I decided that it was better for me to take out a captain's commission and command the boat when he was away, instead of having to pay a stranger to do it."

Today Mrs Leathers is practically retired. That is she still holds her captain's license and is ready to resume her old job of commanding a ship whenever a sufficiently good opportunity offers. But after all, enough is enough, and more than twenty years on the river entitles one to end one's days on land, at least so the lady captain thinks. When she announced that she was going to retire and buy a house in New Orleans there was consternation among her friends at the Custom House.

"No, of course, I haven't given it up," she answered sharply in response to solicitous inquiries. "I shall be a river captain until I die."

But in the meantime Mrs. Leathers is a very busy and a young-old lady. She does her own marketing and cooking and keeping house, to say nothing of playing grandmother to the neighbors' children who swarm through the Tonti Street house as freely as though it were their own. She keeps up with all the affairs of the day including the new books, the new people, and the new styles. She is especially fond of young people.

"I am not much of a hand for sitting around deploring the good old days and wailing about this generation," says she. "Most of my friends are among the new generation and I have a tremendous respect for them. Women nowadays can do anything that men do and one thing that they can't—bear children."

Perhaps there has never been anything else in history so essentially masculine as the steamboat life along the Mississippi. Every boat had its bar. Gambling was the rule and not the exception. People gambled everything they had—estates, fortunes, plantations, jewels, clothing. In the early days they even gambled away their slaves and sometimes whole families of faithful negroes would change hands during their master's trip up the river. Poker was the order of the day. Wine flowed quite literally like water and in those care-free times no one had the faintest premonition of an approaching catastrophe called the Eighteenth Amendment.

A river captain is indeed a jack of all trades. There is nothing he is not expected to do.

"I have done everything but marry people," says Mrs. Leathers, "and I would have done that except that we were so near shore it wasn't necessary. We have had deaths, births, christenings, balls and burials on the old *Natchez*. I have carried away brides on their honeymoons and brought back corpses for burial. I have brought into port more than five thousand, five hundred bales of cotton on one trip, the largest cotton cargo ever shipped at one loading. We have gone down the river when it was so low that the bottom would be sticking out of the water and gone up when it was so high that the wake would almost cover the levee. I was nearly killed one morning when a smokestack crashed on deck and through into my stateroom. I was nearly drowned when the first *Natchez*, our first command, was beached near Lake Providence. You know the captain has full authority over everyone on board from the first mate to the ship's cat. It is perhaps the only job in existence that answers to nobody but itself. And if you own your own boat you are answerable only to God."

Railways, radios and modern inventions have had little effect on the wilfulness of the river. For instance, in May of 1925 the river steamship *Norman* went down with thirty lives.

"I know that tricky run near Memphis," says Mrs. Leathers. "There have been several big disasters there due to the shifting of the river bar. In 1888 we had a similar disaster when we lost the first *Natchez*, the boat I passed my honeymoon on. My husband was in command when we hit a sand bar twenty miles below Lake Providence. He pulled off the bar quickly but the ship's bottom seams opened and the water started to come in. We are sinking I heard him call from the pilot house and he made my sister and me—I was a young wife in those days and very obedient!—get into a life-boat with the other passengers. We reached the shore safely but my husband and several of the crew stayed on the *Natchez* and tried to save her by rushing full steam ahead onto the beach. Nothing was left but the hull and a few scattered bits of cargo."

Yes, it was an adventurous life and an interesting one. Planters, pioneers, frontiersmen from Texas, prospectors from Arkansas, sailors, backwoodsmen, sugar kings and cotton merchants, Mrs. Leathers carried them all. She must have heard many tales strange to a woman's ears. A pity it could not have lasted, that vivid, picturesque cross section of a nation's history. But today the railroads have gotten the steamboat trade. It is cheaper to

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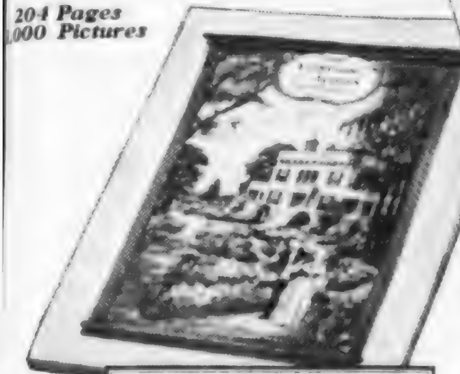

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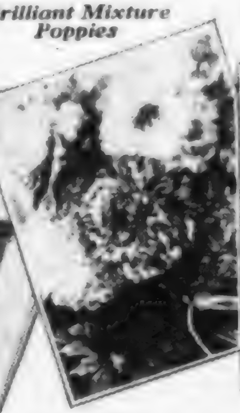

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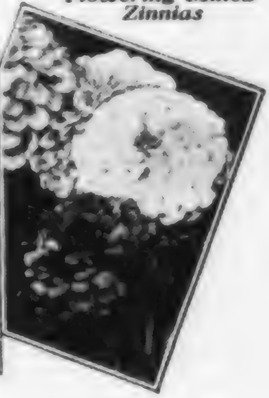

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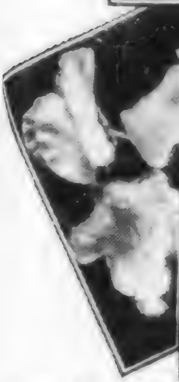

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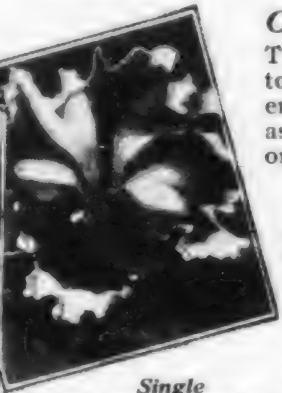

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ship cotton by rail than by boat, quicker to deliver mail by rural free delivery, easier to send groceries to the plantations by motor truck, more popular to travel from New Orleans to Memphis on a Pullman limited than to dally along the landings in a side-wheeler.

"There is no future on the river any more," says Mrs. Leathers, "but I keep my license just the same because I shall never be really anything but a pilot." And it is hard to say when the river may not lure her back again just as it has in the past.

Spring is not only spring to Mrs. Leathers. It is High Water. So many times has she had to tie up along shore because the boats were not permitted to run for fear the waves would batter down the levee. Place a cup of water in an empty plate and you will have some idea of the topography of lower Louisiana. Fill the cup to overflowing and you will have some conception of what high water means to the planters, the squatters, the villagers, the parishes and the citizens of New Orleans. They love the river with the love that people have for something stronger than themselves. They fear it with the fear of those who live below the water level.

"A break in the levee" is the most ominous phrase in the world to a river captain. It means a crevass, a hole in that narrow band of earth that keeps the river from pouring over the land. It means a trickle, a sudden splash, a vast lake—and then the tops of trees, of houses showing above the water. It means that every boat from the river steamers to the tiny dories is manned and rushes out over the great expanse of water picking people off the tops of trees like flies. It means devastation and death.

WHEN word comes that the Ohio is rising in the North the squatters along the banks of the Mississippi cut their pitiful cabins free from stilts and convert them into house boats. Villagers find pressing business in another direction. Cows and goats are enticed off the levee and put to pasture farther in. People pile sand-bags on that great dyke at Carrollton, the strongest levee in the world. It has need to be for it is all that protects the city from destruction. High water means that from the steamers you can look down into the city. New Orleans, even in normal times, is lower than the river. The Mississippi is built along the horizon like a wall.

Farther up, near Vicksburg, it lies tranquil between tall bluffs. Farther down, at Port Eads, it is tame between strong jetties. But it is ever wilful and temperamental and unreliable like a beautiful woman who has always had her own way. It both builds and destroys. The Mississippi sulks and four states are in danger. It pouts and plantations are flooded. It smiles and the shores burst into cotton and sugar cane and prosperity. It beams and the mocking-birds and red birds, roses and jessamine, magnolia and palmetto and sweet olive break into flowers and fragrance and song. It touches ten states and more than eighty cities in its long march down the continent. It is inconsistent from source to finish for it rises in a small, cold, obscure northern lake on the borders of Canada and it empties into one of the most radiant, tropical and magnificent bodies of water in the world—the Gulf of Mexico.

"Can you wonder that I love it?" says Mrs. Leathers.

Jessie Cavanaugh's Last Chance

[*Continued from page 134*]

without warning. One day a huge slab of soapstone fell suddenly with a booming crash and James Cavanaugh was crushed beneath it. He had given his life trying to win independence for his wife and daughter.

Jessie Cavanaugh was not of the kind that quits. She had faith in her father's judgment and she believed as he had that there was still lead in the deserted mine. Instead of giving way to grief and despair, Jessie set herself to the task that had taken her father's life. She had been trained by a master miner. She knew mining better now than many a man in the district. So she determined to support her mother by continuing the work of James Cavanaugh, alone.

Day after day she penetrated farther and farther into the mine, drilling holes in the rock with a heavy hammer and steel drills, tamping in the dynamite, blasting out another hole, mucking out the débris and starting in all over again with the next blast. Around her hair-poised boulders crashed into the cavernous depths below and the treacherous ceiling cracked and split.

For more than a year Miss Cavanaugh stuck to her task, getting out barely enough ore to earn a living for herself and her mother. Naturally she had many narrow escapes, particularly just after blowing a shot of explosive, when the blast had jarred the sides of the shaft and loosened rock gave way unexpectedly. But the pleading of her mother and friends to give up such hazardous work failed to shake Jessie's resolution. Despite the danger and the back-breaking toil she stuck it out.

By this time her struggle was beginning to be talked about in the Galena district. The girl's determination convinced others that there must surely be something left in the old mine. Veteran miners offered to go shares with her,

"**The spring of 1924** is memorable to me for what I suffered through loss of sleep, nervousness—general run-down condition; for six continuous weeks I endured boil after boil on neck and back, and naturally I looked a 'wreck.' Kind people recommended Yeast, but it took a well-known physician to convince me. I can truly say that before I had finished one week's treatment of two yeast cakes a day, I felt a change in my system. Every boil disappeared, my skin cleared, my strength increased. I feel different and look it. Life seems to hold more 'pep.'"

Miss Roberta O'Brien, Montreal, Can.

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Eat two or three cakes regularly every day before meals: on crackers—in fruit juices or milk—or just plain. *For constipation especially, dissolve one cake in hot water (not scalding) before breakfast and at bedtime.* Buy several cakes at a time—they will keep fresh in a cool dry place for two or three days. All grocers have Fleischmann's Yeast. Start eating it today!

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"**I was afflicted with chronic constipation** for years. My attention was drawn to a lecture given by a doctor who spoke on Constipation and advised as a cure Fleischmann's Yeast, together with other proper foods. On my way home, I went into a grocery and asked for Yeast. After I had taken the Yeast for a period of three weeks, my condition improved remarkably. My outward appearance had a decided change for the better, and I still continue to take my Fleischmann's Yeast." Alexandra Gaims, New York City

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This famous food tones up the entire system—aids digestion—clears the skin—banishes constipation.

or to do the work and settle up later if she "struck it rich." To all these offers she turned a deaf ear. As long as she could earn a living for herself and her mother, said she tersely, she would continue to carry on alone. And some day her father's prophecy would come true. Meanwhile the months of work had worn her down to skin and bones and she was going ahead on sheer nerve.

One day, about a year and a half ago, she crawled down the rickety tunnel after a particularly heavy shot of dynamite in a lower drift. She flashed her light into the yawning hole left by the blast—and stopped dead. Suddenly her shoulders began to heave in great sobs. The tears rolled down her grimy cheeks and she tried in vain to rub them off with her shaking, scarred hands. The flickering light of the mining lamp danced upon a great sheet of virgin lead—"black gold." The fortune her father had died to uncover lay spread before Jessie.

The pluck and will power of two people had triumphed in the end and the troubles of the Cavanaughs were over. The rest of the story is quickly told. A mining operator and two other men agreed for 49 per cent. of the stock to rebuild a complete mining plant. Jessie and her mother retained the other 51 per cent. and no stock was ever on sale. Machinery was brought in and the work began to hum. Right from the beginning the mine paid.

Little by little the Cavanaughs began to realize that they were worth thousands of dollars and that they could afford some of the things in life that had always been denied them. In the intervals of Jessie's supervision of the busy mine, they have been able to do some of the traveling they had always longed to do. This summer they took an extended trip east to visit relatives they had not seen for years. Later came a trip to California for the benefit of Mrs. Cavanaugh's health. They are happily planning to see more of a world which has hitherto meant to them unremitting toil against heavy odds.

Jessie Cavanaugh no longer mucks buckets of ore up out of the Last Chance mine. But she knows its winding drifts as no one else can, and hardly a day passes, when they are in Empire, that does not see her going down the main shaft to follow the work with an expert eye. In a way the mine was well named. In another way it is a misnomer. For there is no "last chance" for any one of this girl lead miner's determination and grit.

—G. A. TIBBANS.

Albee of the Keith Circuit

[*Continued from page 34*]

you are not surprised at what he has accomplished. He was born in Machias, way out on the eastern corner of Maine, some sixty odd years ago, his people having lived there for generations. In fact a great-grandfather was one of the thirty volunteers who captured the *Marguerite* in the first naval battle of the Revolutionary War.

Mr. Albee's own story is one of success gained single-handed through imagination, courage, and wise influence for good. Today, the Keith-Albee Circuit owns a hundred and seventy theaters, is affiliated with forty-two others, books thirty more and employs thousands of actors and actresses. The man responsible for this began his real career with the circus.

"I fell into the life," he said, "like a duck into water, but before that, from twelve to fifteen, there wasn't much of anything I didn't do. Like most boys, I sold papers and worked in stores of divers kinds. Then, when I was between fifteen and sixteen, I joined the Barnum shows. I traveled all over this vast country, visiting new sections every day, big towns, middle-sized ones—even the smallest villages. People would come into them from all over the surrounding territory and many of them would camp out for a couple of days while waiting for us to arrive.

"The wagon shows traveled at night, except Sundays. The distance from one town to another was from twenty-five to thirty miles and from fifty to sixty on Sunday. We would start early Sunday morning after the Saturday evening performance, the elephants going first, and travel all day. A man always preceded the show and laid out the route. A fence rail placed in the road would indicate right and left turns to the wagons following.

"THE first night I joined the Burr Robbin's show, I was assigned to a wagon that had a couple of mules hitched to it. There wasn't any room inside for me to lie down, so I was obliged to sit on the driver's seat. I had on a light derby hat and a short light Melton overcoat that came just to my hips. Having recently come from the Barnum show, I felt quite a sport, and was looked upon with envy by these wagon show folks. All night we rode; the old mules kept getting balky and various other things slowed us up. At one place the driver went nine miles off the road. There I sat through it all with nothing to cover my shivering knees. By the time the sun rose and I began to thaw out, I was a wilted proposition!

"With the railroad circuses night travel was a little different. We used to sleep in a box car. There were four tiers of bunks, and mine was above. Many nights after it had been

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raining, we would come in and hang up our wet clothes to dry, then crawl into our bunks and go off to sleep at once. In the morning, with the steaming clothes, the place used to smell like a monkey house!" Mr. Albee smiled at the memory. "But I have never rested so well in my life," he went on, "for those things were not hardships; they were life. We did not mind the cold or the wet; we were getting on to something else. It's the spirit of America.

"We were a happy lot—all interested in each other's affairs and generous to a fault. If you want to know how show people were taken care of when they met with misfortune or illness, let me tell you that no greater example of human kindness, generosity and love could be experienced anywhere than among circus folk.

"It was all wonderful, and the excitement for a boy made it a life not soon to be forgotten. The die was cast. I was to be a showman, and I entered into it with all the enthusiasm of a youngster of sixteen."

The next important step of his career was Albee's partnership with B. F. Keith, now dead, who had a dime museum in Boston. Between them they were to achieve the real beginning of vaudeville.

"I came back East from traveling with the circus, in December of '83," said Mr. Albee. "We usually went into winter quarters in the South, but that year we came to Boston. It was there that I met Mr. Keith for the first time. His main attraction was a one-pound baby, which he charged ten cents to see. He had fixed up an auditorium, seating about three hundred and fifty people, back of a candy store adjoining the Adams House. It was in the best theatrical district—Washington Street was the cream of localities—and such artists as Booth and Salvini were playing there. But Mr. Keith's little place wasn't a success. He had spent his money, but the people didn't come in. What was he going to do? I said, 'The location is wrong for the kind of thing you're running here in this part of the city. The old puritanical people of Boston,'" a humorous twinkle came into Mr. Albee's eyes as he recalled the incident, "'don't like to be seen by the neighbors going into a dime museum—a "hanky-pank." If it was up a side street, where no one could see them going in, they would no doubt be glad to do it. What you want, Mr. Keith, is something more elevating, an excuse for coming that won't hurt their pride.'

"That night I went to the Hollis Street Theater, where they were putting on the *Mikado* for the first time in this country. Richard Mansfield was *Ko-Ko*, and Ida Mull was *Yum-Yum*. That gave me an idea. I suggested to Mr. Keith that we give the Gilbert and Sullivan operas at ten cents. He thought the scheme would cost too much. About five hundred dollars was all he could raise, but I thought that would be enough. I hired a dressmaker and an old scene painter, and bought the material for the costumes. Then we fixed up the entrance and got the animals out of it. It had been filled with all sorts of small 'varmints'—snakes, monkeys, raccoons. I gave them away and transformed the place into a Japanese parlor. A large umbrella, in which the Edison Company of Boston put their first arc light, made the ceiling decoration."

Mr. Albee indicated a group photograph on the wall, significant of the theatrical profession of the early '80's.

"That is the little opera company we organized," he explained. "There were eight in the chorus—four women and four men—besides the principals. In due time, with rehearsals during the day, and taking the company to the Hollis Street Theater at night, we put on the *Mikado* at ten cents. Most of those people, later on, became stars in English opera. Some of them joined Savage's opera company, and some went into other companies. One of my earliest comedians was Raymond Hitchcock. Another was Charles Bigelow, comedian with Anna Held.

"The first day of the *Mikado* we gave six shows of an hour and a quarter each, but we found that was too much for the actors, and formed another company."

FOR the two partners this was the beginning of a success that steadily increased as the years went by. The next important step came in due time. They decided to build a theater of their own. One can imagine the feelings of young Mr. Albee at the thought of his first theater.

"I saw the need," says he, "of raising the standard of our business and, with the chance of being disciplined by Mr. Keith, I spent very nearly seven hundred thousand dollars to build the house in Boston. He had allowed me a maximum of one hundred and twenty-five thousand. But it paid for itself in a few years.

"The late Cleveland House, also the Dayton, and the new theater in Brooklyn, are all steps in the carrying out of dreams that I had when I was a boy traveling with the wagon shows.

"Has America's taste in favorite acts and music changed since my time? I can't see any change. In the old days, we had Weber and Fields, Montgomery and Stone, McIntyre and Heath, Henry Dixie, Maurice Barrymore, and acts of that quality. We also had the greatest acrobats Europe could produce. In addition to this, the general vaudeville bill was made up of singers, musicians, sketches, etc. Today we are doing the very same thing with some of the very same artists and, in addition, a legion of new ones. The acrobatic and animal acts are as popular as ever. One kind of dancing has replaced

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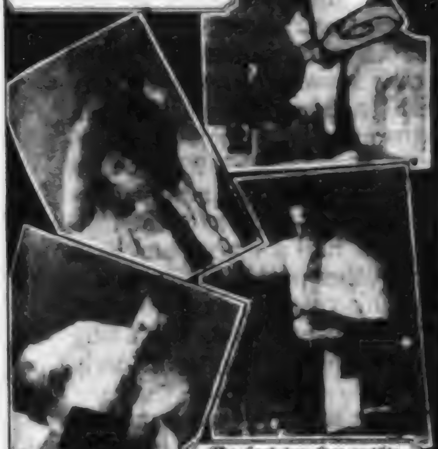

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(Mail immediately to Chief Engineer Dunlap, American School, Dept. E-14, Drexel Ave. & 58th St., Chicago) another. Styles have changed in doing acrobatic acts. Greater attention is paid to paraphernalia and the dressing of acts than in the earlier days. But otherwise, to me, it seems about the same."

Be it known that the "Original Corinne" has played on the Keith-Albee Circuit for forty years. She sings, dances and plays the mandolin just as she did at first. Today she dresses in costume and sings a coon song, in the same manner that won her popularity nearly half a century ago. With her this year is Tony Williams, who has likewise been with the Circuit for forty years.

Weber and Fields, starting with Mr. Albee at the beginning of vaudeville, after a lapse of many years returned to that stage to meet an ovation in every town in which they played.

A group who came under Mr. Albee's direction twenty-four years ago, are the "Four Mortons." They are still with the Keith-Albee Circuit. George Cohan started his career with that circuit as one or the "Four Cohans," which included his mother, his father, Jerry, and his sister, Josephine.

Comedy lines up in popularity about as it did forty years ago. The strongest comedy act, today, is put on in the next-to-closing position to hold the audience for the last act. This is usually a big one in full stage—dancers, a little revue, a little musical comedy, or a jazz band. The first act on a vaudeville bill is generally a silent act, aërial or acrobatic, so that the incoming people will not distract the attention of the audience already seated.

Acts are booked for a route on the circuit that will include all kinds of towns, but some of the smaller ones cannot afford the big headliners, like Cissie Loftus, the Lopez Band, or Elsie Janis. Otherwise there is no difference in the programs presented. A five to seven act bill is the most common out-of-town entertainment, and it runs somewhat in this form: 1—Aërial act. 2—a single woman, singing, or a man and woman team, comedy. This gives opportunity to clear the stage for number 3, which is sometimes a sketch—comedy again—or a dancing act in full stage. 4 is a team, or two boys—a strong comedy act. 5 is a musical revue, animal act, or jazz band.

There are some interesting rules connected with the vaudeville stage. No swearing is allowed in the dialogue, no reference to religious subjects, to sore spots in politics, to prohibition.

Mr. Albee said, "As far as jokes on mothers-in-law, jokes on prohibition, other public questions, or public officials are concerned, we are running theaters to entertain the public, and not to exploit propaganda. We are not here to ridicule or poke fun at different nationalities, different types of people, issues like prohibition or serious conditions that should be treated with care."

No smoking is permitted in the theater unless there is a special smoking-room. No one may purloin for his own act another's "bit of business," and the Keith-Albee vaudeville artists may not play over the radio.

"My principal recreation," says Albee, "is the building of unusual theaters with art galleries, etc."

The latest of these theaters is the *E. F. Albee* in Brooklyn, New York. The white marble foyer and balcony contain an art collection which embraces remarkable examples of the work of Corot, Bougereau, Israels, Sir William Beechey, George Innes, and many other equally famous artists. On the balcony are three famous seventeenth century tapestries depicting scenes from the life of Joan of Arc.

Every detail in the building of such a theater is personally superintended by Mr. Albee. He can be found climbing over the scaffolding when it is in process of construction or later on carefully inspecting the decorating and furnishing.

"I have different color schemes in all of my theaters," says he. "The draperies are specially woven and dyed, and sometimes it takes six months' work before I am satisfied with the shades."

The part of an Albee theater that the public never sees is in some ways more interesting than the front. In the new Brooklyn theater, for instance, there are twenty-six dressing-rooms all equipped with baths and showers. Shining kitchens with electric stoves are ready for any one who may wish to prepare a hasty meal. Even the cleaning women have their own rest-room and culinary department. There is a tailor shop, a laundry with all the newest electrical devices, a nursery full of toys for the children of the performers, and a greenroom, akin to the lounges in the other part of the house.

Whatever success his theaters have brought him, in fact most of the achievements of his long career, go back, thinks Mr. Albee, to his early circus training.

"In my opinion," he said, "it has some advantages fitting a man for later years in business that cannot be found in any other calling. There is the novelty in addition to the practical side, the contact with all classes, the knowledge of the country—its finances, its industry, and its farming. The experience obtained in my fifteen years of travel with all the principal circuses not only gave me a good foundation for hard work, but sharpened my wits, and supplied a broad view of life, which has helped me over many a hard road.

"If you want loyalty," he concludes, "if you want consideration from others—first give them yourself. That is the fundamental principle of what success I have had. Be just, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God. There are not many better precepts for peace and happiness."

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The World as a Blind Man Sees It

[*Continued from page 113*]

selling, for example, report that the seeing frequently buy goods they do not need simply through sympathy. This, of course, is not a pleasant thought for a self-respecting blind man who is trying to make his way on his own merits, and it suggests a bit of advice that should prove helpful in contacts with the blind at all times.

Don't do anything for a blind man he can do for himself. It may be simply a trifle such as picking up something he has dropped, and doing it may be a pleasure. But if he can manage passably well alone, by all means smother your laudable desire to help. Let him do it alone, particularly if he chances to have lost his sight recently.

The hardest and most important lesson the blind have to learn and the one they must learn before they can be happy and useful, is confidence, faith in themselves. And the only way they can learn it is by demonstrating to themselves that they can do things.

Another bit of advice that may aid materially is this: Try as far as practicable to forget the blind are blind. On the face of things this seems difficult, not to say impossible. To the seeing, blindness is a stupendously overwhelming fact. But in reality, disregarding it is not so difficult.

The only difference between you and a blind man is that you can see while the blind man cannot, and as I have been trying to show from the outset of this article that difference is far less than most of the seeing suspect. There is no separate and distinct world of the blind. The world they live in is the same world you live in. Their fundamental desires, problems and pleasures are identical with yours. So the next time you come in contact with a blind man think of him, not as a blind man who must for that reason be far removed and different from you, but as a man like yourself in all essential particulars.

A professor of mine used to draw diagrams on the blackboard while explaining economic law to me. The rest of the class chuckled the first time he did it, and it was incongruous—drawing a chalk figure to make something clear to a student who was blind. But there has always been a warm spot in my heart for that professor. He accepted me without reservations as a member in good standing of his, the world of that classroom, and that in the last analysis is what we all want, blind and seeing alike.

They Couldn't Handicap Him

[*Continued from page 133*]

These must include: first aid, life saving (which includes swimming), personal health, public health, cooking, camping, civics, bird study, pathfinding, pioneering, athletics or physical development, and any nine of the fifty-two other recognized tests. In the case of George Conway, these included first aid to animals, scholarship, firemanship, carpentry, signaling, music, poultry-keeping, handicraft, conservation, and safety first.

Many of these mental, physical and manual trials have proven too much for countless unhampered aspirants. To the Conway boy, handicapped as he was, they were especially hard knots to solve. Three in particular, swimming, life-saving and athletics, taxed his limited powers to the utmost. To meet conditions in the latter, it was compulsory for him to execute a high jump and run fifty yards under eight seconds. In preparing for the successful negotiation of these events, he had to use his crutch.

When those close to the lad saw what a hard task he had set himself, they urged him at least to wait until the doctors' promise of an early substitution of an artificial foot should reach fulfillment. But the indomitable boy refused to postpone the attempt. Instead, he kept heroically at it early and late. All the time he was engaged in the struggle, his leg remained unhealed, and between times the youngster had to return to the hospital to undergo four skin-grafting operations. In two of them his mother made the cuticular sacrifices, being laid up five weeks after the first ordeal and eleven following the other. Despite this discouragement and interruption, the superlative boy never lost sight of his star, but persevered. Eventually he had the sleeveful of required merit badges. Moreover, further to emphasize his rare mettle, he then proceeded to qualify in two extra events for good measure.

An incident connected with his qualification for Eagle Scouthood showed that the youngster wanted no quarter out of sympathy for his unfortunate state. In some way he suspected that the officials, on account of his deformity, had favored him in the fifty-yard dash, and the old resentment against accepting odds flamed up in him. At first he refused to accept their decision, declaring that he could be satisfied only by passing strictly on honest performance.

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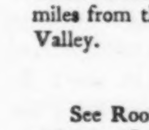

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Consistent with the admirable spirit displayed by the youngster since the accident, the moment he turned sixteen he refused to be idle during the summer. Instead of resting from his high school during the school vacation he began commuting to a job in New York.

It may be a dauntless Celtic ancestry that is spurring this youth onward or perhaps his singular conquests are due to personal fortitude alone. But, no matter what the source, one thing is certain: no other boy scout has ever scaled such shining heights of achievement in the face of such handicaps. It will give the youngsters of coming generations a very gallant example to follow.—JAY MURPHY.

What Price Romance?

[*Continued from page 15*]

And Elmer came, said Ross. He added that he began to see there were qualities in Elmer that he had not suspected. Elmer had called Captain O'Connor a bald headed old vulture before he even got his hand on the rail and if the governor's daughter had not her fingers on his arm just in time he would have made our police chief's face look like a blood pudding. But the governor's daughter said there, there, that was all right. Everybody understood perfectly that Captain O'Connor had to make his bluff and now that it had been called there was no sense in wasting time or hard feelings over it. Besides that she always liked Captain, she said, and she wanted him to be a guest at her wedding.

"That is," she said, "if it is going to be held from my own home, like it has always been my girlish dream to be married that way. But if I have to go on to Maryvale and get married like a hired girl, the *Star* is certainly going to have an illustrated story that will be read in the best families of the capital."

The governor said, with a soothing wave, that it was all right. He wasn't going to see his little girl get married anywhere else but in her own home and he'd like to see any one say anything different. But he was still kind of red in the neck and about this time he caught sight of me for the first time. Of course, I had been practically sitting on his lap for fifty miles, but he had been too full of other troubles to think about me. Or maybe he saw a chance to bark at some one and restore his personal standing with himself:

"Who the hell is this boy?" he asked.

I told him that he ought to know, for I was Old Man Ross's son and I saw him every single week when he came up to the house to play poker with Dad and the other members of the Old Settlers' Club. I guess maybe I was a little nervous while I was making this explanation and, anyhow, I was just at that age when the human voice is apt to blow up without warning. The governor turned red again:

"Why," he said, "why, why, why—that is the voice of whoever it was who telephoned me that this fool girl was running away. I remember it. It had just that same funny crack—"

So then the governor's daughter came over and put an arm around my shoulders, said Ross, and said that not only was I the one who had telephoned the governor, but the whole plan was due to me.

"He invented it," said she, "and it all worked out just the way he said it would—bottle and nightshirt and all."

It was then, said Ross, that the governor's daughter kissed him. He had never forgotten how it felt, he said. She was a natural born vamp that could make men jump through hoops for her and anyhow he had not planned that blackmailing getaway for her and Elmer. He had only helped plan it. He was going on to tell how pretty she looked, with her dark eyes shining and her cheeks just faintly pink when I interrupted.

"What about it?" I asked. "What happened, anyhow? How did the star handle the story?"

Ross said that, hell, there wasn't any story and three weeks later the bum was the best man at the wedding. But if he had written the story it would have been a peach:

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A little foresight will keep you among the fortunate who escape. At least every six months let your dentist go over your mouth carefully to detect signs of gum infection and start now to brush night and morning with Forhan's for the Gums.

The entire family should brush with Forhan's. It's a pleasant tasting dentifrice that firms the gums and keeps them pink and healthy. It gives the teeth a thorough cleansing and keeps them white and clean.

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